LETTERS

OF THE LATE

LORD LYTTELTON.

FIFTH EDITION.

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THE

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no ſpecies of publication which ſeems to be more agreeably received than that which illuſtrates the characters of men diſtinguiſhed for their abilities, venerable for their erudition, and admired for their virtues. The political hiſtory of great men is uſeful and

neceſſary to many; but the domeſtic hiſtory of all men is uſeful and neceſſary to all.

Among the materials from whence the biographer forms the volume of domeſtic Characters, private letters are conſidered as the moſt valuable, becauſe they are the moſt unequivocal authorities of real ſentiment and opinion. Converſation is too fugitive to be remembered; public declarations may be oftentimes ſuſpected; but the epiſtolary communications of friendſhip may be depended upon as faith-

faithful to the mind from whence they ariſe. The following Letters, therefore, as proceeding from a Nobleman whoſe great talents promiſed no ſmall utility to his country, and whoſe character has been the ſubject of ſuch general ſpeculation, will, without doubt, meet with a favourable reception.

That they were not written with the moſt diſtant idea of being offered to the world, will be evident to every reader; and, ſurely, no inconſiderable ſhare of merit will be allowed them from

ſuch a circumſtance. They may want, perhaps, the correctneſs and accuracy of prepared compoſitions; but they poſſeſs that eaſy ſincerity, and that open unboſoming of ſentiments, which form the charm of epiſtolary correſpondence.

Some liberties have been taken with the Letters at large, by omitting ſuch as alluded to tranſactions which the world already too well knows, or which it would be ſhameful to betray. But no alteration has been made in any individual Letter, except an

an occaſional retrenchment of expreſſions, which, however common in faſhionable life, or unobſerved in faſhionable converſation, would not juſtify their being condenſed into print, and might give cauſe of offence to the ſcrupulous reader.

There may be alſo ſome irregularity in the diſpoſition of the Letters: the *thirteenth*, and the *laſt*, ſhould have an earlier place: but they were already numerically arranged; and, as a preciſe order does not ſeem to be material, no alteration of this kind has

been attempted, which, after all, muſt have been made upon conjecture.

As theſe Letters were, in general, without any dates, and not one of them marked with that of the year, it was thought proper to omit them throughout. The *thirtieth* Letter, which appears to have been written the laſt of the Collection, bears, in the manuſcript copy, a conjectural date of the ſummer of 1775. As it was a matter of particular requeſt, it was thought prudent to ſuppreſs the names of thoſe perſons

perſons to whom theſe Letters were addreſſed: though it is rather natural to ſuppoſe, that every reader, who has lived in the world, will form very probable conjectures of them, without any great exerciſe of thought, or power of divination.

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER THE FIRST.

My dear Friend,

YOU do me great injuſtice: I receive your letters with the greateſt pleaſure; and I gave your laſt the uſual welcome, though every line was big with reproaches to me. I feel myſelf greatly mortified that you

you ſhould have a ſuſpicion of any neglect on my part. When I ceaſe to anſwer your addreſſes, you will be juſtified in ſuppoſing me careleſs about them: till then, you will, I hope, do me the juſtice, as far at leaſt as relates to yourſelf, to think well of me. I very ſenſibly feel the advantage of your good opinion, and the loſs of it would greatly affect me. You may be aſſured that my inſenſibility to reputation is not ſuch as ſome part of my conduct may have given you reaſon to believe: for, after all his bluſtering and looking big, the heart of the worſt man cannot be at eaſe, when he forces a look of contempt towards the ill opinion of mankind.

In

In ſpite of all his bravadoes, he is an hypocrite twelve hours out of the four and twenty; and hypocriſy, as it is well ſaid, is the homage which Vice pays to Virtue: unwillingly, I confeſs; but ſtill ſhe is forced to pay it.

I will moſt frankly acknowledge to you, that I have been as well diſpoſed to turn my back upon the good opinion of the world as any one in it; and that I have ſometimes accompliſhed this important buſineſs without confuſion of Face, but never without confuſion of Heart. On a late very mortifying occaſion, it was not in my power to poſſeſs myſelf either with one or the other.

other. At a public and very numerous meeting in the county where my Father lives, where great part of his property lies, where his influence is conſiderable and his name reſpectable, I was not only deſerted but avoided; and the women could not have diſcovered more horror on my approaching them, if I had been *Tarquin* himſelf. I found myſelf alone in the croud, and, which is as bad, alone out of the croud. I paſſed the evening without company; and two or three ſuch evenings would either have driven me to deſpair, or have reformed me. I was then convinced, as I always am when I write to you, that there is ſome particle of good ſtill remaining in me: but

I flew

I flew from that ſolitary ſcene which gave ſuch a conviction, to renew that diſſolute intemperance which would deſtroy it.

It is a great misfortune, that Vice, be it what it may, will find ſome one or other to flatter it; and that there ſhould be aſſemblies of people, where, when public and honourable ſociety has hiſſed you from the ſtage, you may find, not only reception, but applauſe — little earthly *pandemoniums*, where you meet with every means to huſh the pains of reflection, and to guard againſt the intruſions of conſcience. It requires a moſt gigantic reſolution to ſuffer pain, when paſſion quickens every ſenſe,

ſenſe, and every enticing object beckons to enjoyment. I was not born a Stoic, nor am I made to be a martyr! So much do I hate and deteſt pain, that I think all good muſt be dear that is to be purchaſed with it. Penitence is a rack where offences have been grievous. To ſit alone and court Reflection, which will come perhaps, every moment, with a ſwinging ſin at her back, and to be humble and patient beneath the ſtripes of ſuch a ſcourge; by heavens, it is not in human nature to bear it! I am ſure, at leaſt, it is not in mine.—If I could go to confeſſion, like a good papiſt, and have the ſcore wiped off at once, *à la bonne heure!*—But to repent like a

ſob-

ſobbing, paralytic Preſbyterian, will not do for me : I am not fat enough to repent that way. *George Bodens* may be qualified for ſuch a ſyſtem of contrition; but my ſkinny ſhape will not bear mortification: and, if I were to attempt the ſubdual of my carnal luſt by faſting and prayer, I ſhould be ſoon faſted and prayed into the family vault, and diſappoint the worms of their meals.

I have had, as you well know, ſome ſerious converſations with my Father upon the ſubject; and one evening he concluded a chriſtian lecture of a moſt unchriſtian length by recommending me to addreſs Heaven to have mercy upon me,

and to join my prayers to his conſtant and paternal ones for my reformation. Theſe expreſſions, with his preceding counſels, and his affecting delivery of them, had ſuch an effect upon me, that, like the King in Hamlet, I had bent the ſtubborn ſinews of my knees, when it occurred to me that my devotions might be ſeen through the key-hole. This drew me from my pious attitude; and, having ſecured this aperture, ſo unfriendly to ſecret deeds, I thought it would not be an uſeleſs precaution to let down the window-curtains alſo; and, during the performance of that ceremony, ſome lively muſic, which ſtruck up in the ſtreet, caught my attention, and gave

gave a ſudden flirt to all my devout ideas: ſo I girded on my ſword, and went to the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, where Mrs. *Cole* and the Reverend Dr. *Squintum* ſoon put me out of humour with praying, and into humour with myſelf.

I really began this letter in very ſober ſerioufneſs; and, though I have ſtrayed from my grave airs into ſomething that wears a ludicrous appearance, I beg of you not to give up all hopes of my amendment. If there were but half a dozen people in the world, who would afford me the kind encouragement I receive from you, it would, I verily believe, work a reformation in the Prodigal:

but the world has marked me down for ſo much diſſoluteneſs, as to doubt, at all times, of the ſincerity of my repentance. ——— has already told me, more than once, that I am got ſo deep into the mud as to make it highly improbable that I ſhould ever get out; that I am too bad ever to be good; and that my future lot is either to be an open villain or an undeceiving hypocrite. Pretty encouragement truly! Lady *Huntingdon* would tell me another ſtory: but, however that may be, I ſhall never give myſelf up for loſt, while I retain a ſenſe of your merit, and a value for your friendſhip. With theſe ſentiments I take my leave, and beg of you to

be

be aſſured that I am moſt ſincerly yours, &c.

LETTER THE SECOND.

SO —— —— turns up his eyes, and ſignificantly ſhrugs his ſhoulders, when my name is mentioned; and, to continue the farce, pretends to lament me as a diſgrace to his family! I am almoſt aſhamed to acknowledge it, but this idle hiſtory has given me a more ſtinging mortification than I almoſt ever felt. How inſignificant muſt he become, who is openly deſpiſed by Inſignificance; and how loud muſt the hiſs of the world be, when ſuch a puny

whipſter inſults me! If honourable men were to ſpeak of me with contempt, I ſhould ſubmit without reſentment; for I have deſerved it. If they ſhould beſtow their pity upon me, I ſhould thank them for giving me more than I deſerve. If mankind deſpiſe, I have only to reſiſt or fly from the contempt; but to be an object of ſupercilious airs, from one who, two years ago, would have wiped the duſt from off my ſhoes, and who, perhaps, two years hence, will be proud of the ſame office,—a puny prattler who does not poſſeſs a ſufficient degree of talent or importance to give dignity either to virtue or crime,—I ſay, to be the butt of ſuch a one ſeverely mortifies me.

Were

Were I on the other ſide of the water, his backbiting looks and ſhrugs ſhould be changed in a moment to well-made bows and ſuppliant poſtures. If I live, the ſcurvy knave ſhall do me homage! It really frets me, that I cannot, in four-and-twenty hours, meet him face to face, and make his ſubſervient attentions give the lie to his humbling compaſſion, in the preſence of thoſe before whom he has traduced me. The day of my revenge will come, when he ſhall open his mouth for me to ſpit in it, as he was wont to do, and perform every dirty trick for which paraſites were formed. His genius is to fetch and carry; a very ſpaniel, made to fawn and eat your leavings;

whoſe whole courage riſes no higher than to ape a ſnarl. If I live to outlive this ſniffling pedagogue, I ſhall ſee him make a fooliſh end of it. Mark my words—I am a very *Shylock*,—I will have Revenge!

The laſt word I have written puts me in mind of telling you that ——— has been with me for ſome time. The raſcal, who is a prieſt into the bargain, carried *aqua fortis* in a ſyringe for three months together, to ſquirt the fiery liquor into the eyes of a fortunate rival. In this diabolical deſign he ſucceeded, and the object of his malice was for ever deprived of half his ſight. I have converſed with him on the horrors

horrors of this tranſaction; but the *Italian* finds a conſolation in his own infernal feelings, and a juſtification in the dying command of his Father, whoſe laſt words compoſed this emphatic ſentence,—"*Remember, my ſon, that Revenge is ſweet.*"

This man is capable of any villany, if money is to be got by it; and I doubt not but he might be bribed to undertake, without heſitation, robbery, ſeduction, rape, and murder. However, my ſuperior virtue for once overawed his villainy: for he moſt certainly had it in his power to have robbed me of a large ſum of money, without the poſſibility of a diſcovery; and, if he thought

thought it neceſſary, he might have diſpatched me with as little danger. I have ſince aſked him what ſtrange fit of virtue, or fear of the devil, came acroſs him, when he had ſuch an opportunity to make his fortune. The impudent raſcal replied, at once, that he had very powerful ſuggeſtions to ſend me to the other world; and that, if, fortunately for him, I had poſſeſſed one ſingle virtue, he ſhould, without ceremony, have diſpatched me to my reward. This event, I think, will make a compleat Mandivillean of me. You ſee, for your encouragement, that a bad life is good for ſomething; and for the good example which the world will receive from me in

times

times to come, it will be indebted to the very bad one I have already given it.—After this ſignal and providential preſervation, I cannot but think that Heaven has ſomething particularly great in ſtore for me.

As I tell it you, this hiſtory has the air of a *badinage*; but you may be aſſured that it is a real fact, and I am ſorry that the circumſtances of it are too long and various to be inſerted in a letter. I believe you know ſomething of the man; but, if you repeat what I have written to any-one who is acquainted with him, you will ſoon find that I have had a very narrow eſcape. I have bribed him to leave me, and

he

he is gone for *England*. The ſtory of *Lewis* the *Fourteenth* and his Barber is well known; and you may, if you pleaſe, apply it to

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER THE THIRD.

My dear Friend,

YOUR letter, which I received no longer ago than yeſterday, would do honour to the moſt celebrated name among the moral writers of any period. It is the moſt ſenſible, eaſy, and conciſe hiſtory of the Paſſions I have ever read. Indeed, it has not been my lot to have given

given any great portion of my time to ſuch ſtudies. Theſe powers have kept me too much in the ſphere of their own tumultuous whirlwinds, to leave me the leiſure of examining them. I have been, am, and I fear ſhall be, their ſport and their ſlave; and when I ſhall acquire that ſerenity of character which will enable me to examine them with a philoſophical ſcrutiny, I cannot tell. My expectations are at ſuch a diſtance upon this point, that I am almoſt aſhamed to mention my apprehenſions to you. It is, however, treating you with the confidence you deſerve, to tell you, that from my ſoul I think the very ſource of them muſt be dried up before they will loſe

their

their empire over me. In the lively expreſſion of the poet, " they are the elements of life," without which man would be a maſs of inſenſible and unintelligent matter. Now, it is that happy compound of theſe elementary particles of intellectual life, that you ſo well deſcribe, ſo thoroughly underſtand, and ſo happily poſſeſs, which I deſpair of attaining. I have the reſolution to make reſolutions, but it extends no farther; I cannot keep them: and to eſcape from the miſery brought on by one Paſſion, I have ſo habituated myſelf to bathe in a branch of the ſame flood, that I cannot look for any other relief.— You very naturally aſk me where all

all this muſt end?—I know not!—and to ſimilar interrogatories I have ſometimes madly replied, I care not!—But I ſhall not offend you with ſuch a declaration; and when I am writing to you, I do not feel myſelf diſpoſed to do it. In anſwering you, therefore, I ſhall adopt the language of the ruined gameſter, who addreſſed his ſhadow in the glaſs: "*Je vous ai dit et redit, Malheureux! que, ſi vous continuiez à faire de pareils tours, vous iriez à l'hôpital.*"

You lay great ſtreſs upon the powers of Reaſon, and, in truly philoſophical language, heightened by the moſt proper and affecting imagery,

gery, preſent this ſage directreſs of weak mortals to my attention. I receive her at your hand, reſpect her as your friend, and venerate her as the cauſe of your ſuperiority over me: but whether ſhe perceives that my reſpect is inſincere, or remembers how ſhamefully I have neglected her; ſo it is, that ſhe ſlides inſenſibly from me, and I ſee her no more—My bark rides ſteady for a moment, but it is not long ere it again becomes the ſport of winds and billows. But, after all, and without any blaſphemous arraignment of the order of Providence, permit me to aſk you, Why is this principle, implanted in our natures for the wiſe and happy regulation of them,

them, ſo weak in itſelf, ſo ſlow in its progreſs, and ſo late in its maturity? If it is deſigned to controul our Paſſions, why does it not keep pace with them?—wherefore does it not *grow with their growth*, and *ſtrengthen with their ſtrength?*—and what cauſe can be aſſigned that the one are ripe for gratification before the other has ſcarce burſted into bloſſom? Let us, however, take a long ſtride from the imbecillity of youth to the firmneſs of mature age, and we ſhall ſee that the Paſſions have only changed their form; that Reaſon ſtill totters, is frequently driven from her throne, and even deſerts thoſe who have moſt cultivated her friendſhip, and acknow-

ledged her power. The conteſt frequently continues through life, and the ſuperiority as often ends, where it always begins, on the ſide of Paſſion. We may be ſaid even ſometimes to outlive Reaſon, while Paſſion of ſome kind, and, many times, of the worſt kind, will preſerve its influence to the laſt. To conclude the matter, how often does the lamp of human Reaſon become extinct, yielding corporal nature a prey to Paſſion in the extreme, whoſe tortures are rendered more fierce by the iron reſtraints of neceſſary policy and medical interpoſition!

If it were poſſible to trace the courſe of Reaſon in the mind of the beſt

beſt man that ever lived, from its firſt budding to a fulneſs of maturity, what a mortifying ſcene would be unveiled! What checks and delays, what tranquillity and tumult, what frequent extinction and renovation, what rapid flights and ſudden downfals, what conteſt and ſubmiſſion, would compoſe the operations of this rightful miſtreſs of human actions! Men of cold tempers, and habituated to reflection, may cry up this diſtinctive faculty of man; they may chaunt its apotheoſis, and build temples to its honour:—ſuch were Lord Shafteſbury and Mr. Addiſon;—and they may be joined by thoſe whoſe fortunate education and early connections

have given to their warmer diſpoſitions the beſt objects: in that confined but happy ſociety, I muſt place my friend, whoſe kind ſtar preſerved his youth from temptation, and bleſt his bloom of manhood with the ample and all ſatisfying pleaſures of virtuous love.—You will not ſuſpect me of wiſhing to diminiſh the reality of that merit which I ſo much admire, or of a deſire to damp the glow of that virtue whoſe luſtre cannot be diminiſhed by my envy, or heightened by my praiſe; but, in the courſe of human affairs, time and chance have ſo much to do, that I cannot ſuppoſe even your worth to be without ſome obligations to them.

To conclude this very, very long letter, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that I do not underſtand why *Reaſon*, that divinity of philoſophers, ſhould be cooped up in the confined region of the brain, while the Paſſions are permitted to range at large, and without reſtraint, though every other part of the body.—I ſee you ſmile;—but be aſſured that theſe two jarring powers are, for a moment, both united in me, to aſſure you that I am, with a real ſincerity,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE FOURTH.

I AVAIL myſelf, Madam, of the very obliging offer you made me of ſuffering a ſmall parcel to occupy an uſeleſs pocket in your coach. It is of ſome little importance; but if the Cuſtom-houſe officers at *Dover* ſhould ſuſpect you of being a ſmuggler of lace, as you certainly are of other and better things, and inſiſt upon examining its contents, I beg you will indulge their curioſity without ceremony. On your arrival in London, when any of your ſervants ſhould be unemployed, I muſt deſire the additional

ditional favour of its being ſent to the place where it is addreſſed.

I feel myſelf extremely mortified, that a cold, which forbids me to utter any thing more than a whiſper, ſhould have prevented me from offering you my perſonal wiſhes for your health and happineſs, an agreeable journey, and a ſafe arrival in England, where your friends will feel a delight in ſeeing you, which can be only equalled by their regret whom you have left behind. Among the number of them I am not the leaſt ſincere; and, tho' I found your gates but very ſeldon open for me, I am truly grateful to you for the pleaſure I received whenever you

indulged me with the honour of an admittance.

Perhaps your caution, in this particular, proceeded from an ill opinion of me: you might conſider me as a perſon too dangerous to break with openly, or too intruding to truſt with familiarity. If ſo, you have done me wrong, and, what is more, you have done injuſtice to yourſelf. There is a dignity in virtue like yours, which commands reſpect from all; and the worſt of men would be overawed in his approaches to it. Perhaps, Madam, there was alſo a little compaſſion mingled with your reſerve. You muſt be conſcious of your charms; but, poſſeſſed of an heart

heart which would find no glory in coquettiſh triumphs, you did not ſuffer me to approach you, leſt I ſhould be ſcorched by the beams of that beauty which is ſufficient to inflame all, and which you preſerve for one. If ſuch humane conſiderations governed the orders which were given to your *Swiſs*, it becomes me to expreſs my grateful ſenſe of your kindneſs: but, if you acted from motives not ſo favourable to me, I muſt lament, as a tenfold misfortune, that you ſhould add another thong to the ſcourge of injuſtice.

I believe, in my heart, that your ſociety, and ſuch as I ſhould have met with you, would have been of great

great uſe and benefit to me; and that, in being ſo ſparing of your welcomes, you omitted doing a great good. The very buſineſs of this letter has made a gloomy mind leſs gloomy; and, if I had half a dozen letters to write to half a dozen perſons like yourſelf, if ſo many could be found in the world, it would make this day, in ſpite of every unpleaſant indiſpoſition, one of the happieſt and beſt of my life. During the future part of it, what of good or honour is deſtined for me, I cannot tell; but I ſhall ever conſider it as a very great and moſt flattering privilege, whenever you will permit me, in any manner, to aſſure with what real reſpect

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER THE FIFTH.

OF all the birds in the air, who ſhould have been here but ———! I met her in the———, where ſhe could not well avoid me, though I ſaw in her looks a wiſh to do it. She received me therefore with great politeneſs; converſed with much eaſe and vivacity during the walk; and, when I requeſted permiſſion to wait on her, ſhe granted it, in that ſort of manner, which told me, in as ſtrong terms as looks could give, "You are "very imprudent to riſk ſuch a requeſt; "but, as an abſolute refuſal might "raiſe conjectures in thoſe about

"us

"us unfavourable to you, I will not "anſwer you with a denial, and my "gates ſhall not always be ſhut againſt "you. But you will do well to pro- "portion your viſits to what you may "naturally conceive to be my deſire." And ſhe has kept her word. During ſix weeks that ſhe was here, I called ten times, and was admitted only thrice, when there was a great deal of company.—This is a very ſuperior woman; for, while ſhe conducts herſelf in ſuch a manner to me, as to tell me plainly that the reſpect ſhe has for my family is the only inducement to give me the reception ſhe does, there is not a ſingle look ſuffered to eſcape her, from which any perſon might form the moſt diſtant

diſtant ſuſpicion of her ſentiments concerning me. It is my blab of a conſcience that does the buſineſs for me;—it is that keen-ſighted lynx, which ſees things impervious to every other eye: and thus I expoſe myſelf to myſelf, when I appear without ſpot or blemiſh to the circle about me.

———————— is a very fine woman, a very ſenſible woman, and, what is more rare, a very rational woman. The three qualities of beauty, talents, and wiſdom, which are generally ſuppoſed to be incompatible in the ſame female character, are, however, united in her. There is another circumſtance which, though

a rake,

a rake, I cannot but admire, and which the moſt diſſolute reſpect in others, though they are ſtrangers to it themſelves;—I mean conſtancy. From the united principles of duty and affection, ſhe is faithful to her huſband, who, to ſay the truth, highly deſerves it. Such a woman is capable of making the bad good,—the inconſtant ſtable, and the giddy wife; and he, who would wiſh to ſee what is moſt perfect and reſpectable in the female character, would do well to make a pilgrimage to ſee and converſe with her. I was ſo very much afflicted with a cold, as not to be able to go and hand her to the coach on her departure; which was a circumſtance ſtill more afflicting

ing than the cold: ſo I conſoled myſelf by writing her a letter, which was half ſerious, more than half gallant, and almoſt ſincere.

If you could, by any means, diſcover,—and I ſhould think it would be in your power to do it without much trouble,—whether ſhe has at any time mentioned it, and, if ſo, in what manner ſhe expreſſed herſelf, you would very ſenſibly gratify the curioſity of,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE SIXTH.

IT is ſo long ſince I received your letter, that I am almoſt aſhamed to anſwer it; and be aſſured, that, in writing my apology, and aſking your pardon, I act with a degree of reſolution that I have ſeldom experienced. I hardly expect that you will receive the one or grant the other: I do not deſerve either, or indeed any kindneſs from you of any ſort; for I have been very ungrateful. I am myſelf very ſenſible of it, and very much apprehend that you will be of the ſame opinion. I was never more

conſcious

conſcious of my follies than at this moment: and, if you ſhould have withdrawn yourſelf from the very few friends which are left me, I ſhall not dare to complain; for I deſerve the loſs, and can only lament that another and a deeper ſhade will be added to my life. The very idea of ſuch a misfortune is moſt grievous; and nothing can be more painful than the reflection of ſuffering it from a fatal, ill-ſtarr'd, and abortive infatuation which will prove my bane. I have written letters, ſince I received yours, to many who have never done me any kindneſs; to ſome who have betrayed me; and to others whoſe correſpondence adminiſtered no one comfort to my

heart, or honour to my character: and for them, at leaſt engaged with them, I have neglected you, to whoſe diſintereſted friendſhip I am ſo much indebted, and which is now become the only point whereon to fix my anchor of hope.

But this is not all: if it were, I have ſomething within me which would whiſper your forgiveneſs; for you know of what frail materials I am made, and have ventured, in the face of the world's malice, to prognoſticate favourably of my riper life. But I fear that you will think meanneſs added to ingratitude, when I tell you, that I am called back to acknowledge your paſt goodneſs to me, and to aſk a repetition

a repetition of it, not from any renewed ſentiments of honour or gratitude, but by immediate and wringing diſtreſs. In ſuch a ſituation your idea preſented itſelf to me; an idea which was not encouraged in ſeaſons of enjoyment: it never wiſhed to ſhare my pleaſure, but, like the firſt-born of friendſhip, it haſtened to partake my pain. Though it came in ſo lovely a form, I dared not bid it welcome; and I ſtarted, as at the ſight of one whom I had ſeverely injured, whoſe neglect, contempt, and revenge, I might juſtly dread, while I did not poſſeſs the leaſt means of reſiſtance, nor had a covert left where I might fly for refuge!

This is a very painful confeſſion, and will, I hope, plead my cauſe in your boſom, and win you to grant my requeſt. I have written to ——— for ſome time paſt, and have never been favoured with one line of reply. Indeed, it has been hinted, that he refuſes to read my letters. However that may be, he moſt certainly does not anſwer them. In order, therefore, that I may know my fate and be certain of my doom, I moſt earneſtly and ſubmiſſively intreat you to deliver the incloſed letter into his hands. ——— If I ſhould be deſerted by you both, the conſequences may be of ſuch a nature, as, in the moſt angry paroxyſm,

roxyſm, you would, neither of you, wiſh to

Your moſt obliged, &c.

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

My dear ——,

I RETURN you all my thanks for the endeavours you have made to ſatisfy the wiſhes of my laſt letter. I am very grateful to you, though they have proved fruitleſs. I ſuppoſe ſhe deſtroyed the paper the moment ſhe had peruſed the contents of it.

 Perhaps,

Perhaps, ſhe did not even deign to read it, but delivered it immediately to the flames, as tainted and infectious in coming from ſo unholy a perſon as I am. The idea mortifies me. To be treated with contempt is always painful, and more ſo to thoſe who deſerve it, as they have no ſhelter in themſelves to which they can fly for protection: in their own hearts they will find the echo of thoſe ſounds againſt which they ſhut their ears; while the good man poſſeſſes a ſhield in his virtue, and returns compaſſion for injuſtice. Contempt becomes ſtill more poignant, when it is conducted with a delicacy which does not give you the moſt momentary opportunity of

of returning it; when it is ſo blended with good-humour and external decorum as to let no one ſee it but the conſcious victim.

In this manner did the fair Lady manage the matter with me: ſhe honoured me with every mark of exterior reſpect: ſhe ſuffered no polite attention or civility to eſcape her; at the ſame time, her conduct towards me was ſo general and equally tempered, that ſhe won me, as it were by enchantment, into the ſame mode, and precluded familiarity. I had indeed brought myſelf to the reſolution of making my approaches more nearly, when ſhe immediately diſcovered my deſign, and, by aſking ſome

queſtions about my father, which were wholly unexpected on my part, and connected with ſome very ſtinging ideas, ſhe threw me at once to my former diſtance, diſſipated in a moment the impudence I had collected for the occaſion, and I have never ſeen her ſince.

You have ſome ſportable fancies upon the ſubject, and you are welcome to them: but for once you are beſide the mark; and, though your incredulity may oppoſe itſelf to my aſſertion, believe me that I have an honeſt reſpect for this woman, and it is on that account that I am ſo ſeverely wounded by her treatment of me. The contempt of half mankind

is

is not worth the ſmile it occaſions: they act from caprice, folly, weakneſs, envy, or ſome baſe motive; they join the vulgar clamour they know not why; and their hiſs, tho' loud, gives not the pain of a moment: but the ſcorn of good and honourable men is the fruit of conviction; it ſprings from an averſion to what is contrary to their own excellence, and cannot be retorted. There is no other way of being revenged of them, but in giving the lie to their unfavourable prognoſtications, by an immediate and complete reformation; and this is a difficulty, my friend, of whoſe arduous nature you are equally ſenſible with myſelf. —*Facilis deſcenſus Averni,—ſed revocare*

care gradum, &c. &c. &c.——The road by contrition to amendment is humiliating, painful, and difficult; and the greater part of guilty mortals adopt the ſentiments of *Macbeth:*

——— ——— " I am in blood
Stept in ſo far, that, ſhould I wade no more,
Returning were as bad as to go o'er."

But to the purpoſe; I have another commiſſion for you, in which I flatter myſelf you will be more ſucceſsful than in your laſt. You muſt know, then, I am in a bad plight, and there is no good ground of expectation that matters will go better with me: on the contrary, the proſpect is a dark one, and the gloom encreaſes every ſtep I take. To extricate myſelf,

ſelf, if poſſible, I wrote to ———, who has not anſwered my letters, and, I am diſpoſed to think, never opens them. I was, therefore, under the neceſſity of addreſſing a very pitiful, penitential epiſtle to ———. I have uſed him ſcurvily, and made ſuch an ill return to all zeal to ſerve me, that I have too much reaſon to apprehend his reſentment. He paſſed through —— about ſix weeks ago, without enquiring after me. However, without appearing to know any thing of that circumſtance, I ventured to tell a miſerable tale to him, and to beſeech his kindneſs would once more intereſt itſelf in my behalf, by delivering a letter into ———'s own hands. It would be an eaſy

matter

matter, I ſhould imagine, to diſcover if he has complied with my requeſt. T— — will inform if he has been lately, and when, in — — ſtreet. Perhaps he may have ſcented out ſomething more; and whatever you can diſcover I ſhould be glad to know with all poſſible diſpatch. They will, probably, be ſlow in their operations, whatever they may be; and your information will direct my hopes, or confirm my fears—will either give a ſunſhine to the preſent ſhade, or prepare me for the worſt. Adieu, and believe me

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

YOU accuſe me of neglect in not informing you that I was in London. Believe me I had every diſpoſition in the world to do it, but was oppoſed by circumſtances, which, among other mortifications, prevented me from ſeeing you. I came to *England* in ſo private a manner, that I imagined no one would, or, indeed, could know of my arrival; but, by a combination of unlucky circumſtances, the ſecret was diſcovered, and by thoſe who were the moſt likely to make a very unpleaſant

pleaſant uſe of their knowledge. I was therefore obliged to ſhift my plan, and to beg H— — to give me an aſylum in his houſe, where he very kindly received and entertained me. My abode was not ſuſpected by any one; and I remained there till certain people were perſuaded that I had never left the Continent, or was again returned to it; and till the hell-hounds, which were in purſuit of me, had relaxed their ſearch.

You muſt, certainly, have heard me mention ſomething of my Hoſt and Hoſteſs: they are the moſt original couple that ever were paired together; and their ſingularity effected what, I believe, no other amuſement could

could have attained—it made me forget the diſagreeableneſs of my ſituation. He poſſeſſes a ſtrange, wild, rhapſodic genius, which, however, is not uncultivated; and, amid a thouſand odd, whimſical ideas, he produces original burſts of poetry and underſtanding that are charming. She is a foreigner, aſſumes the title of Counteſs, and, without knowing how to write or read, poſſeſſes, in the circumſtance of dreſs, behaviour, &c. all her huſband's diſpoſitions. She is fantaſtic, groteſque, outrée, and wild; nevertheleſs, at times, there are very pleaſing gleams of propriety in her manners and appearance.

I cannot

I cannot deſcribe ſo well as you may conceive the ſtriking and odd contraſt of theſe two characters; and what ſtrange ſparks are produced by the colliſion of them. When ſhe imagines that Cytherea acknowledges her divinity, and he graſps in his hand the lyre of Apollo; when the goddeſs unfolds herſelf to view with imaginary millions at her feet, and when the god chides the chairs and tables for not being awakened into a cotillion by his ſtrains; in ſhort, when the ſublime fit of madneſs is on, it is an auguſt ſcene: but if the divinities ſhould rival each other, heaven changes inſtantly to hell, Venus becomes a trull, and Phœbus a blind fidler. It is impoſſible

poſſible to deſcribe the riot; not only reflections, but things of a more ſolid nature are thrown at each other. Homer's genius is abſolutely neceſſary to paint celeſtial combats. But it ends not here: this ſuperb opera, which was acted, at leaſt, during my ſtay, three times a week, and rehearſed generally every day, for the moſt part, has an happy concluſion. The conteſt requires the ſupport of nectar, which ſoftens the edge of reſentment, puts the parties in good-humour, and they are ſoon diſpoſed to acknowledge each other's merit and ſtation, with a zeal and fondneſs ſuperior, if poſſible, to their late rage and oppoſition. A number of collateral circumſtances ſerve as in-

terludes to the grand piece, and, though leſs ſublime, are not leſs entertaining.

You will now, probably, be no longer diſpleaſed with me for making my hiding-place a ſecret. One hour's attendance upon our orgies would have done for you; on the contrary, they ſuited me. I wanted ſomething to hurry my ſpirits, to diſſipate my thoughts, and amuſe my mind; and I found it in this retreat. You know enough of the parties to enter into my deſcription. I hope it will make you laugh; but, if my pen ſhould fail, I will promiſe to make your ſides ach when we meet again; a pleaſure which I look to with

with a moſt ſenſible impatience. I remain,

Yours moſt truly, &c.

LETTER THE NINTH.

SINCE the little ſnatch of pleaſure I enjoyed with you, I have been again obliged to make my retreat: I had made good my ground, in my own opinion, but the devil that is in me would not ſuffer me to maintain it. There is a proverb of *Zoroaſter* to the following effect,— "That there are an hundred oppor-

tunities of doing ill every day, but that of doing well comes only once a year." There is ſome wit and much truth in the obſervation. The wiſe man was led to make it, I ſuppoſe, from the circumſtances of the times wherein he lived; and, if it had been his lot to breathe in theſe latter days, he would be equally juſtified in forming and applying ſuch an opinion; and, perhaps, in every intervening period. Indeed, if I may judge from my own experience, matters are ſtill growing worſe; for I never fail to find the *daily* opportunities, but the *annual* one has ever eſcaped me.

There is nothing ſo miſerable,

and,

and, I may add, ſo unfortunate, as to have nothing to do! The peripatetic principle, that Nature abhors a *vacuum*, may be applied, with great propriety, to the human intellect, which will embrace any-thing, however criminal, rather than be without an object. It is a matter of indubitable certainty with me, that, if I had kept my ſeat in Parliament, moſt of the unpleaſant predicaments in which I have been involved ſince that time would have been avoided. I was diſpoſed to application in the political line, and was poſſeſſed of that ready faculty of ſpeech which would have enabled me to make ſome little figure in the ſenate. I ſhould have had employment; my

paſſions would have been influenced by a proper, animating object, and my vanity would have been ſufficiently ſatisfied. During the ſhort time I ſat in Parliament, I found myſelf in the ſituation I have deſcribed: I was pleaſed with the character; I availed myſelf of its privileges while I poſſeſſed them; I mingled in public debate, and received the moſt flattering teſtimonies of applauſe. If this ſcene had continued, it would have been very fortunate for myſelf, and have ſaved my friends great anxiety, and many alarms: you, among the reſt, would have been ſpared the pain of much unavailing counſel and diſregarded admonition.

You

You know me well enough to be certain that I muſt have a particular and not a common object to employ my attention: it muſt be an object which inſpires deſire, calls forth activity, keeps hope upon the ſtretch, and has ſome ſort of high colouring about it. Power and popular reputation are of this kind, and would greatly have engroſſed my thoughts and wiſhes; they would have kept under the baſer paſſions: I ſhould have governed them at leaſt, and my ſlavery, if I was deſtined to be a ſlave, would have been more honourable. But, loſing a ſituation ſo ſuitable to me, I fell back a prey to that influence which had already proved ſo fatal, and yeilded myſelf

a victim to an habitual diſſoluteneſs which formed my only pleaſure.

I do not mean to write a diſreſpectable thought of my father; I would not offend you by doing it; but, ſurely, his ignorance of mankind is beyond all conception. It is hardly credible that a man of his underſtanding and knowledge, whoſe life has been ever in the world, and the moſt poliſhed ſocieties of it, who writes well and ably on its manners, ſhould be ſo childiſh in its concerns as to deſerve the coral that amuſed and the go-cart that ſuſtained him ſixty years ago. I write in confidence; and you know what I aſſert to be true. Indeed, I might go further,

ther, and trace the errors of my own life from the want of that kind of paternal diſcernment which ſees into the character of his child, watches over its growing diſpoſitions, gently moulds them to his will, and completes the whole by placing him in a ſituation ſuitable to him.

I have been the victim of vanity; and the ſacrifice of me was begun before I could form a judgment of the paſſion. You will, probably, underſtand me; but, if there ſhould be the leaſt gloom in my alluſions, I will, with your leave, explain the matter further in ſome future letter. There is a great deal of difference between

between a good man and a good father: I have known bad men who excelled my father as much in parental care as he was ſuperior to them in real virtue.—But more of this hereafter. In the mean time, and at all times, I am, &c.

LETTER THE TENTH.

YOU have, certainly, given yourſelf very unjuſtifiable airs upon my ſubject: neither your talents, knowledge, figure, courage, or virtue, afford you the ſhadow of that ſuperiority

ſuperiority over me, which, I underſtand, you affect to maintain. However imprudent or bad my conduct may have been, whatever vices I may unfortunately poſſeſs, be aſſured I do not envy you your ſniveling virtues, which are worſe than the worſt vices, and give an example of meanneſs and hypocriſy in the extreme. Your letter is a *farrago* of them both; and ſince the receipt of it I deſpiſe you more than ever.

What, Sir! has my father got a cough, or does he look thinner than uſual, and read his Bible? There muſt be ſome certain ſymptom of his decay and diſſolution that could induce you to addreſs yourſelf ſo kindly

kindly to one, who, to uſe your own expreſſion, is, as he ought to be, abandoned by his family. You have dreamed of an hatchment upon — — Houſe, and ſeen a viſionary coronet ſuſpended over my brow. You are a ſimpleton and a paraſite to let ſuch weak reaſons guide you to wag your tail and play the ſpaniel, and renew your offers to fetch and carry. Be aſſured for your comfort, that, if ever you and I have any future intercourſe together, it will be upon ſuch terms, or worſe.

I have heard it ſaid, and I believe it to be true, that you pretend to lament your poor — —'s fate, and, with a more than rueful viſage, prog-

prognoſticate the breaking of his heart from the wicked life of his graceleſs ſon. Now, I will tell you a ſecret, that, ſuppoſing ſuch a canting prophecy ſhould take place to-morrow, you would be the firſt to flatter the *parricide*. I conſider you with a mixture of ſcorn and pity, when I ſee you ſo continually hampered in difficulties from your regard to the preſent and future Lord: though you order your matters tolerably well; for there is not one of our family to whom your hypocritical canting will not anſwer in ſome meaſure, but to myſelf. I know you, and I declare you to be incapable of any love or affection to any-one, even to a mother or a ſiſter. You know

know what I mean; but, to quit an idea abhorrent to human nature, let me entreat you, if it is in your power, to act with candour, and, if you muſt ſpeak of me, tell your ſentiments openly, and not with thoſe covert looks, and affected ſhrugs, which convey ſo much more than meets the ear: and be ſo good, I pray you, as to raiſe your merit upon your own mighty ſtock of virtues, and not upon my vices. The world will one day judge between us, and I muſt deſire you to be content with the acknowledged ſuperiority you will receive from the arbitration in your favour.

Oh, ſtultum nimis eſt, cum tu praviſſima tentes,
Alterius cenſor ut vitioſa notes!

I have

I have not yet ſung a requiem to my own honour; and, though you and ſome others of my good friends may have chaunted a dirge over the grave you have yourſelves dug for it, it does not reſt, however, without the hopes of a joyful and ſpeedy reſurrection. To have done with you for the preſent, I have only to deſire you to be an open enemy to me, or a real friend, if you are capable of either: the halting between two opinions on the matter is both diſgraceful and contemptible. Be aſſured that I give you theſe counſels more for your own ſake than for that of,

Your humble ſervant, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE ELEVENTH.

My dear Sir,

YOU wiſh that I ſhould explain myſelf at large with reſpect to that vanity which I accuſe of having been the cauſe of every inconvenience and miſdoingof my paſt life, to which I owe the diſagreeable circumſtances of my preſent ſituation, and ſhall be indebted, probably, for ſome future events which, I fear, are in ſtore for me.

You will, I believe, agree with me that vanity is the foible of my family:

family: every individual has a ſhare of it for himſelf and for the reſt; they are all equally vain of themſelves, and of one another. It is not, however, an unamiable vanity: it makes them happy, though it may ſometimes render them ridiculous; and it never did an injury to any-one but to me. I have every reaſon to load it with execration, and to curſe the hour when this paſſion was concentrated to myſelf.

Being the only boy and hopes of the family, and having ſuch an hereditary and collateral right to genius, talents, and virtue, (for this was the language held by certain perſons at that time,) my earlieſt

prattle was the ſubject of continual admiration: as I encreaſed in years, I was encouraged in boldneſs, which partial Fancy called manly confidence; while ſallies of impertinence, for which I ſhould have been ſcourged, were fondly conſidered as marks of an aſtoniſhing prematurity of abilities. As it happened, Nature had not been a niggard to me; it is true ſhe has given me talents, but accompanied them with diſpoſitions which demanded no common repreſſure and reſtraint, inſtead of liberty and encouragement: but this vanity had blinded the eyes not only of my relations, but alſo of their intimate connections; and, I ſuppoſe, ſuch an hot-bed of flattery was never before

uſed

uſed to ſpoil a mind, and to choak it with bad qualities, as was applied to mine. The late Lord Bath, Mrs. — — —, and many others, have been guilty of adminiſtering fuel to the flame, and joined in the family incenſe to ſuch an idol as myſelf. Thus was I nurſed into a very early ſtate of audacity; and being able, almoſt at all times, to get the laugh againſt a father, or an uncle, &c. I was not backward in giving ſuch impertinent ſpecimens of my ability. This is the hiſtory of that Impudence which has been my bane, gave to my exceſſes ſuch peculiar accompaniments, and cauſed thoſe, who would not have heſitated to commit the offence, loudly to con-

demn the mode of its commiſſion in me.

When I drew towards manhood, it will be ſufficient to ſay, that I began to have ſome glimmering of the family weakneſs: however, I was ſtill young; dependence was a conſiderable reſtraint, and I had not acquired that ſubſequent knowledge of the world which changed my notions of paternal authority. I was, therefore, without much difficulty, brought to conſent to the deſign of giving ſolidity to my character, and preſerving me from public contagion, by marriage. A rich and amiable young Lady was choſen to the happy and honourable taſk of ſecuring

curing ſo much virtue as mine, to correct the natural exuberance of youthful inexperience, and to ſhape me into that perfection of character which was to verify the dreams of my viſionary relations.

I muſt own that the Lady was both amiable and handſome, but cold as an anchorite; and, though formed to be the beſt wife in the world to a good huſband, was by no means calculated to reclaim a bad one. But, to compleat the ſenſible and well-digeſted plan in which ſo many wiſe heads were concerned, it was determined for me to make the tour of Europe, previous to my marriage, in order to perfectionate my

matrimonial qualifications; and the lovely idea of the fair maid I left behind was preſented to me, as poſſeſſing a taliſmanic power to preſerve me from ſeduction. But this was not all: for the better enabling me to make a proper and becoming appearance, or, in other words, to give me every means of gratification, the family purſe was laviſhly held forth; I was left almoſt without controul, in point of expence, and every method purſued to make me return the very reverſe of what expectation had painted me.—You know as well as myſelf what happened during my travels, as well as after my return, and I truſt that you will impute my miſconduct, in part at leaſt, to its primary cauſe.

In this ſhort ſketch of the matter, which conſiſts rather of hints than deſcriptions, you will ſee the drift of my reaſoning, and know how to apply it to a thouſand circumſtances in your remembrance. You were preſent at my being received into the arms of my family with a degree of warmth, delight, and triumph, which the brighteſt virtue could alone have deſerved; and you recollect the cauſe of all this rapturous forgiveneſs, which, I believe, penitence itſelf would not, at that time, have effected: it was my having made a ſpeech in Parliament, flowery, indeed, and bold, but very little to the purpoſe; and at a time when, as I was certain that I ſhould

loſe my ſeat, it would have been prudent in me to have remained ſilent: however, Mr. Ellis thought proper to compliment me upon the occaſion, and to obſerve, that I ſpoke with hereditary abilities; and this circumſtance inſtantly occaſioned the ſhort-lived family-truce that ſucceeded.

That my relations may have cauſe to complain of me, I do not deny; but this confeſſion is accompanied with an opinion, in which I doubt not of your acquieſcence, that I, on my ſide alſo, have no ſmall cauſe of complaint: and, however black the colour of my future life may be, I ſhall ever conſider that the duſky

ſcenes

ſcenes of it are occaſioned by the vanity of my family, and not by any obdurate or inflexible diſpoſitions inherent in my own character. I am, with great regard,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWELFTH.

My dear ——,

IF you had been at all explicit with me about the *Arabian Courſer*, he ſhould, moſt certainly, have been at your ſervice. Notwithſtanding he was the gift of *Hymen*, to whom I have

have ſo few obligations, the animal was a favourite, and I brought him to the continent with me, where he was very troubleſome and very uſeleſs. But he troubles me no more; and a little ridiculous event, which happened a few weeks ago, made me hate and deteſt him. If there had been any laughers, the laugh would have been very much againſt me on the ocaſion: as it was, I felt and looked ſo fooliſh, that I never afterwards could turn a favourable eye upon the beaſt that was the cauſe of my mortification,

I ſhall not give you an account of this little hiſtory; for, as I am the principle hero of it, I ſhall not tell it

it well: ſo I reſign the taſk to P—. When you ſee him, therefore, queſtion him upon the ſubject, and he will do it juſtice. He is a moſt lively, good humoured, and pleaſant man, who bears the ills of life as if they were bleſſings, and ſeems to take the rough and the ſmooth with an equal countenance. This ſort of unbended philoſophy is the beſt gift that Nature can beſtow on her children; it lightens the burden of care, and turns every ſable and ghaſtly hue of melancholy to bright and ſplendid colours. There is no one I envy ſo much as I do P—: a cap and bells is a crown to him; a tune upon a flageolet is a concert; if the ſun ſhines, he ſports himſelf in

in its beams ; if the ſtorm comes, he ſkips gaily along, and when he is wet to the ſkin, it only ſerves to make out a pleaſant ſtory while he is drying himſelf at the fire. If you are dull after dinner, he will get him up and rehearſe half a dozen ſcenes out of a play, and do it well ; and be as pleaſed with his performance as you can be. With all theſe companionable talents, he is neither forward, noiſy, or impertinent ; but, on the contrary. very converſable, and poſſeſſes as pleaſant a kind of good breeding as any-one I ever knew.

His company has been a great relief to me, and I recommend you to cultivate his acquaintance as an enter-

entertaining and agreeable companion. You and I, my dear Friend, are differently, and, I muſt add, leſs happily framed. We are hurried about by every guſt and whirlwind of paſſion; and, tho' Hope does throw a pale gilding upon our diſapointments, Fear never fails to interrupt our pleaſures.—I would give more than half of what I ſhall ever be worth to be bleſſed with a moiety of P—'s temper and diſpoſition.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE THIRTEENTH.

My dear Friend,

I BEG your pardon, and plead guilty to the crime laid to my charge! The Dialogues which you have ſeen were written by me, on hints given me by an infidel Frenchman at *Turin**. That it was a folly, to ſay no worſe, to amuſe myſelf with ſuch compoſitions, I readily acknowledge; nor am I leſs diſpoſed

* Theſe Dialogues are too irreverent and profane to juſtify a publication. The perſonages of the firſt are the *Saviour of the World* and *Socrates*; and of the ſecond, *King David* and *Cæſar Borgia*.

to

to own that it was the weakeſt of all vanities to diſperſe any copies of them. Your ſuſpicion of their having been compoſed, in an evil hour, as a ridicule upon thoſe which have been publiſhed by my father, is a natural one; but, believe me, it is not founded in fact. Bad as they may be, they were not writ for ſo bad a purpoſe; and, if I had conſidered the poſſibility of ſuch an idea becoming prevalent, they would never have been expoſed to any inſpection. I wrote them originally in French, and never, to my recollection, gave them an Engliſh dreſs, but when I read them accidentally to ſome-one who did not underſtand the former language. I was flattered

tered into the ſuffering of ſome copies to be taken by the declaration of a reſpectable literary company, that they were ſuperior to *Voltaire's* Tragedy of *Saul*; and theſe copies muſt have been greatly multiplied to have made it poſſible that one of them ſhould have reached you. I am very ſorry for it; for you have already more than ſufficient reaſon to fill your letters to me with reproaches; and I curſe the chance that has thrown another motive in your way to continue a train ſo diſagreeable to us both.

It is true that my father is a chriſtian, and has given an ample teſtimony of his faith to the world by

by his writings: but it was long after he attained to my age that he became a convert to that ſyſtem which he has defended. It is painful in me, and hardly fair in you, to occaſion our being brought together in the ſame period: it takes from me the means of juſtification where I could uſe them, and of palliation where a complete defence might not be practicable.—As to my Right Reverend uncle, I ſhall conſider him with leſs ceremony. He alſo may be a good chriſtian; but I recollect to have heard him make a better diſcourſe upon the *outſide* ornaments of an old Gothic pulpit, I think it was at *Wolverhampton*, than he ever delivered *in* one, throughout

the whole courſe of his evangelical labours. He ſeems much more at home in a little harangue on ſome doubtful remnant of a *Saxon* tombſtone, than in urging the performance of Chriſtian duties, or guarding, with his lay Brother, the Chriſtian fortreſs againſt infidel invaſion. I well remember alſo to have heard his Right Reverence declare that he would willingly give one of his fingers, *that was his expreſſion*, to have a good natural hiſtory of *Worceſterſhire*. What holy ardor he may poſſeſs as an *Antiquarian* I cannot tell; but, in my conſcience, I think he would make a ſorry figure as a *Chriſtian Martyr*, and that a zeal for our holy religion would

would not enflame him to risk the losing of a nail from his finger.

I repeat to you, upon my honour, that I did not wish these *jeux d'esprit* should have gone beyond the limits I had prescribed for them. The very few persons to whom I gave them were bound, by a very solemn promise, not to circulate their contents, or to name their author. If they have forfeited their word, I am sorry for it; but the failure of their engagement cannot be imputed to me, and the severest judge would not think me guilty of more than *chance-medley* on the occasion. In your breast, I hope, there is a complete and full acquittal for,

Your most sincere and obliged, &c.

LETTER THE FOURTEENTH.

My dear ——,

I CANNOT bring it within the compaſs of my belief, that H—— has eſcaped your recollection: however, I ſhall be able to reſtore it to its proper tone in a moment, by mentioning an ode addreſſed by him to me on the ſubject of Gaming. You admired it too much to have forgot the author; and it now occurs to me, that you, or ſome-one in the company, rehearſed on the occaſion a long ſtring of laughable *Eton* and *Oxford* anecdotes concerning him: nay, the very laſt time we

we were together, you ſarcaſtically repeated to me ſome of his vaticinations on my impetuous attachment to play, and kindly foretold the completion of them. After all, I believe you are either laughing at me, or pretending ignorance of my bard, in order to have an haſh of the ſame diſh which you are pleaſed to ſay delighted you ſo much in my laſt letter.

Was it not you, or do I dream? —who was ſo charmed with that part of his poem where he deſcribes my being ſo reduced by gaming as to be obliged to ſell H— —, and ſuppoſes the eſtate to be bought by the deſcendant of ſome felon who was

reprieved from death to tranſportation by my *anceſtor the Judge*, whoſe picture he tears down from the wall, as a ſight diſguſting to him. I am not certain as to the correctneſs of my recollection, but the lines are, I believe, to the following effect:

Shall ſome unfeeling ſtranger reign
Within that bleſt domain?
Some Convict's ſpawn, by thy foreſather's breath,
Perchance, repriev'd from death?
Whilſt thou, ſelf-baniſh'd, ſelf-enſlav'd, ſhalt roam,
Without a friend or home!
—Still ſhall he tremble at the Judge's frown,
And, fraught with ſpite, tear down,
From the repining wall, his venerable ſhade, &c.

It is a compoſition of great merit; and, if he was ſo fortunate as to poſſeſs a ſenſe of harmony, he would almoſt put an end to the preſent vacation of poetry and poets. His thoughts are original, bold, and nervous; his images apt, lively, and beautiful; his language is never puerile, but ſometimes low, and ſometimes inflated. If his taſte was improved, and he had an ear for verſification, which I think he has not, his compoſitions would be delightful, and, as I have already obſeved, place him in the firſt rank of modern poets. P—s, I believe, ſometimes viſits him, and will moſt willingly preſent you *à Monſieur* and *Madame*, if you make known your

wiſhes to him.—A letter from me would ſhut his door againſt you: my former favour was never equal to my preſent diſgrace; and, if you wiſh to be well in that quarter, you muſt not acknowledge the leaſt regard for me. Indeed, you would do well never to mention the name of,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE FIFTEENTH.

AND I awoke, and behold I was a Lord! It was no unpleaſant tranſition, you will readily believe, from infernal dreams and an uneaſy pillow, from inſignificance and dereliction, to be a Peer of Great Britain, with all the privileges attendant upon that character, and ſome little eſtate into the bargain. My ſenſations are very different from any I have experienced for ſome time paſt. My conſequence, both internal and external, is already greatly elevated; and the *empreſſment* of the people about me is

is ſo ſuddenly encreaſed as to be ridiculous. By heavens! my dear — —, we are a very contemptible ſet of beings; and ſo on.

Without meaning any-thing ſo deteſtable as a pun, I ſhall certainly *lord* it over a few of thoſe who have looked diſdain at me. My coronet ſhall glitter ſcorn at them, and inſult their low ſouls to the extreme of mortification. I have received a letter from — —, that dirty paraſite, full of condolence and congratulation, with a *my Lord* in every line, and *your Lordſhip* in every period. I will make the raſcal lick the duſt; and, when he has flattered me till his tongue is parched with lies, I will

will upbraid him with his treaſon, and turn my back upon him for ever. There are a ſcore of bugs, or more, of the ſame character, whom the beams of my proſperity will warm into ſervility, and whoſe names will be left at my door before I have been ten days in town: but may eternal ignominy overtake me, if I do not make the tendereſt vein in their hearts ach with my reproach! Whether the world will be converted into reſpect towards me, I do not pretend to determine; its anger will, at all events, be ſoftened: but, be that as it may, I can look it in the face with leſs fear than I was wont to do, and make it ſmile upon my political career, though

though it may ſtill hold a frowning aſpect towards my moral character.

Permit me, however, to aſſure you, that, whatever change may appear in me towards others, I ſhall ever be the ſame to you. The acquiſition of fortune, and an elevation to honours, will not vary a line in my regard to thoſe whoſe friendſhip has been ſo faithful to me as yours has been; nor ſhall you ever have cauſe to repent of your aſſiduous kindneſs to me. There is a balance in the human paſſions, and the mind that is awake to a ſpirit of Revenge is equally inſpired by the ſentiments of Gratitude. There is a dirty crew who ſhall experience the

the former, while you may confide in my ſolemn aſſurance to you of a moſt ample exertion of the latter.

A propos, I muſt beg of you to forward the encloſed letter to ———. With much difficulty I perſuaded her ſome time ago to return to England; and I am apprehenſive ſhe may be already in town, expecting my arrival. If it be poſſible, contrive ſome means to free me from her perſecutions, both for her ſake and my own. Should ſhe be come to London, you will know where to find her: make any promiſes you may think neceſſary in my name, and uſe every reaſon your imagination can ſuggeſt, to perſuade her

her to return into the country.—You underſtand me.

— — and — — — are gone from hence this morning, to indulge their fancies in the buſineſs of cold iron, and powder and ball. I was very near being hampered in the affair; but my ſable ſuit and funeral duties excuſed me from the employment, and I ſuppoſe the firſt news I ſhall hear of the event will be in England; where I hope ſhortly to ſee and embrace you. In the mean time, believe me,

Moſt ſincerely yours, &c.

LETTER THE SIXTEENTH.

My dear Friend,

YOUR letter reached me with a large packet of others which my father's death had occaſioned. How altered is the language of them upon the occaſion! Yours, indeed, is exactly the ſame, or, if any thing, bears the tincture of more than uſual ſeverity. Flattery is a ſtrain altogether new to me, and by the two laſt poſts I have had enough to ſurfeit the moſt arrant coquette upon earth. It is true, I cannot compliment your letter with poſſeſſ-

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ing an atom of adulation; nevertheleſs, it is the only one which has given me real pleaſure, becauſe it is the only one which bears the characters of real friendſhip. Though I have acted in ſuch a direct oppoſition to your cautions and remonſtrances, I am not the leſs ſenſible to that generous paſſion which produced them, and has now taken the firſt opportunity to give me the eſſence, as it were, of all your former counſels, in thus calling my attention to real and permanent honour. However I may offend you hereafter, you ſhall never again have cauſe to reproach me with a forfeiture of my word. I have, at preſent, loſt that confidence in myſelf, which would

juſtify

juſtify me in offering aſſurances to you: the hopes of regaining it, however, are not entirely vaniſhed, and when they are fulfilled, which, I truſt, they will one day be, you ſhall receive the firſt-fruits of my renovation.

I underſtand the purpoſe of your obſervation, that the generality of men employ the firſt part of life in making the remainder of it miſerable. I feel its force, and conſider it as an indirect caution to me not to purſue a conduct which muſt be attended with ſuch a lamentable conſequence. But, alas! *credula turba ſumus*; though I have paid dearly for my credulity, unleſs it ſhould

be immediately followed by the fruits of an wholeſome experience. We deſpiſe the world when we know it thoroughly; but we give ourſelves up to it before we know it, and the heart is frequently loſt before it is illuminated by the irradiations of reaſon.

I have now ſucceeded to the poſſeſſion of thoſe privileges which are a part, and perhaps the beſt part, of my inheritance. Clouds and darkneſs no longer reſt upon me. My exterior of things is totally changed; and, however unmoved ſome men's minds may be by outward circumſtances, mine is not compoſed of ſuch cold materials

as

as to be unaffected by them. Such an active ſpirit as animates my frame, muſt have objects important in their nature, inviting in their appearance, and animating in their purſuit. No longer forced to drown the ſenſibility to public diſgrace and private inconvenience in *Circean* draughts, my character, I truſt, will unfold qualities which it has not been thought to poſſeſs, and finally diſſipate the kind apprehenſions of friendſhip.

My natural genius will now have a full ſcope for exertion in the line of political duty; and I am diſpoſed to flatter myſelf, that the application neceſſary to make a reſpectable

figure in that career, will leave me but little time for thoſe miſerable purſuits, which, of late, have been my only reſource. But I muſt deſire you not to expect an inſtant converſion; the æra of miracles is paſſed, and, beſides, the world would ſuſpect its ſincerity. It is true, I am ſinner ſufficient to call down the interpoſition of Heaven, but the preſent age has no claim to ſuch celeſtial notices. My amendment muſt be ſlow and progreſſive, though, I truſt, in the end, ſincere and effectual. But be aſſured, that, however the completion of your good wiſhes for me may be deferred, I am perfectly ſenſible that there is ſomething neceſſary beſides title, rank,

rank, and fortune, to conſtitute true honour.—With this ſentiment I take my leave of you, and am, with real truth,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

My dear — —,

I AM at an Inn, and alone; and, if you were to gueſs for ten years, and had one of *Oſborne's* Catalogues to aſſiſt you, ſure I am that you would not divine the book which has amuſed my evening, and given a ſubject to this letter: nay, I may venture to

tell you it is poetical, and ſtill bid defiance to your penetration.

My two travelling volumes had been read twice in the courſe of my journey, and, as it would not be worth the trouble to unpack a trunk for more, I deſired the waiter to aſk his miſtreſs to ſend me a book; and in the interim I amuſed myſelf with fancying what kind of publication would be brought me, reſolving however, if it ſhould be the *Pilgrim's Progreſs*, the *Whole Duty of Man*, or even the Holy Bible, to make it the ſubject of my evening's lucubrations. The waiter returned, and deſired to know if I choſe proſe or verſe. This I thought looked well, and my preference

ference being declared for the latter, I was, in a few minutes, preſented with a ſmall volume which I found to be a Preſbyterian hymn-book, entitled *Horæ Lyricæ*, by a Dr. Watts. My expectations were a little chagrined upon the occaſion: however, I turned over a few pages, looking curſorily at the contents in my way, when I dropped upon a little odd compoſition, the ſubject of which was no leſs ſingular than applicable to myſelf. The title of it was, *Few Happy Matches*.—From the character of the author, who was a diſſenting miniſter, I had conceived that the reaſons of matrimonial infelicity would be trite, whining, and ſcriptural, and that I ſhould find ſome

bouncing anathemas againſt ſuch offenders as your humble ſervant: but it turned out quite otherwiſe; the idea is a fanciful one; and I dare affirm, that, if *Apollo* and the *Nine Muſes* had racked their brains for a twelvemonth, they could not have hit upon ſuch a conceit.

The poet ſuppoſes that human ſouls come forth in pairs of male and female from the hands of the Creator, who gives them to the winds of Heaven to bear them to our lower world, where, if they arrive ſafe and meet again, they inſtinctively impel the bodies they animate towards each other, ſo as to produce an Hymeneal union, which,

which, being originally deſigned by their Author, muſt be neceſſarily happy; but, as from the length of the way, and the many ſtorms, &c. that check and come acroſs it, they are generally ſeparated before they reach their deſtination, their re-union is very rare; and the forming an alliance with any other but the original counterpart, being, as it were, an extraneous connection, muſt be neceſſarily miſerable, and will produce thoſe jarrings and contentions which ſo generally diſturb matrimonial life.—This ingenious fancy will make you ſmile; nor would the ideas which occur to me on the ſubject re-brace your muſcles, if I had paper or time to bear me out in them.

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They muſt ſerve for another opportunity.——Thus, according to my good Doctor Watts, matches are made in heaven, but marriages on earth. I ſhould think ſome of them have been fabricated in——— *

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* * but no more of that.

I really feel myſelf much indebted to this Pindaric Preſbyterian for ſetting my conſcience at reſt, which, now and then, had a momentary qualm on a certain ſubject. The unlucky

unlucky counterpart, which accompanied my ſoul from Heaven's gates, was toſſed in ſome whirlwind, driven by ſome lightning, or detained by ſome aerial froſt, and, at length, I ſuppoſe, caſt aſhore among the antipodes. We are not deſtined, I believe, to meet again: and I fear, poor ſoul! if I may judge from myſelf, that her lot is a very lamentable one, wherever it may be.

After all that ſentimental talkers and ſentimental writers may produce upon the ſubject, marriage muſt be conſidered as a ſpecies of traffick, and as much a matter of commerce as any commodity that fills the warehouſe of the merchant. We exchange

exchange paſſion for paſſion, beauty, titles, &c. for money, youth for age, and ſo on. The buſineſs may ſometimes anſwer; but there are few examples, I fear, when the profit and loſs come to be ſtated, where the balance is conſiderable in favour of the former. Who, ſays the Spaniſh proverb, has ever ſeen a marriage without fraud, if beauty be a part of the portion? This idea will hold good in every other inſtance, and corroborates my principle of its being a matter of trade, which has its foundation in fraud and tricking. One marries for connections, another for wealth, a third from luſt, a fourth to have an heir, to oblige his parents, and ſo on. Every one of your married

ried friends will come under these or similar descriptions, except Lord C— —, who married his Lady, as he buys his buckles, because she was the *Ton*; and I doubt not, but he was completely miserable, that he could not change her, as he does his buckles, for the fashion of the next spring, or, perhaps, the next month.

Plato was at a loss under what class to rank women, whether among brutes or rational creatures: Doctor *Watts's* ideas are far more favourable to the sex, for he has not hesitated to give them celestial natures. I must acknowledge that I have my doubts upon the subject. *Mahometanism*

Zaniſm has, certainly, ſome fine points about it: give him wine, and a *Turk's* life is not a bad one. So good night to you!——

LETTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

YOUR ſtring of modern wits is not worth a beadſman's roſary. The æra of wit is paſſed. There are not half a ſcore of men in the kingdom who deſerve that title; and the riſing world give no hopes of its reſtoration. The tree that bears ſuch fruit

fruit is blaſted. Do me the favour, I beſeech you, to diſtinguiſh between a man of wit, and one who makes you laugh. The repetition of an old tale, a grimace, a blunder, the act of laughter in another, or even a ſerious look, may cauſe the muſcular convulſion; but wit is not levelled ſo much at the muſcles as at the heart, and the latter will ſometimes ſmile when there is not a ſingle wrinkle upon the cheek. How it could ever enter into your head to think *Chaſe Price* a Wit, puzzles and perplexes me. He has no more pretenſions to it than he has to Grace. He is a good-humoured, jolly buffoon, that writes a bawdy ſong, and ſings it; ſays things that nobody

nobody but himſelf would chuſe to ſay; and does things that nobody beſides would chuſe to do. Believe me, that *Chaſe's fort* is Politics; not public, but private politics; the ſcience of which he underſtands better, and practiſes with more ſucceſs, than any man in Great Britain. He is never without a point in view, or a game to play; and he never ſings a ſong, or tells a ſmutty tale, without ſome deſign. Mere amuſement to himſelf or others is not Mr. Price's plan: his humour has been a good fortune to him; and he will contrive, I doubt not, to make it laſt as long as himſelf. Do you think, when *Bolingbroke*, *Swift*, *Arbuthnot*, *Pope*, &c. &c. were aſſembled together, that

that the converſation of ſuch a bright conſtellation of men was like the ribaldry of Mr. Price. Their Wit did not conſiſt in roaring a bawdy catch, &c.; it was the feaſt of reaſon, and the flow of ſoul. The flaſhes of imagination adorned and gave brilliance to the high diſcourſe: Wiſdom was enlivened, and not wounded, by their Wit; and, among them, the herd of laughter-loving fools would not have found a ſingle grin to conſole them.—If I were to ſing one of Mr. Price's ballads, or to repeat one of his ſtories, you would receive, I fear, but little pleaſure from the exhibition, becauſe I could not give them the accompaniments of noiſe and grimace which

form their principal merit: and, perhaps, beſides my deficiency in acting my part, I might produce the entertainment an hour too ſoon. But Wit may be repeated by any one at any time, and, I believe, in almoſt any language, with ſatisfaction and ſucceſs: time may drown it in oblivion, but cannot alter its nature: as long as it is remembered it will pleaſe; while the facetious exhibitions of a boon companion will ſcarce ſurvive his funeral.—But to proceed in your catalogue.

Lord C— —e's Wit, as well as that of his friend, lies in his heels, and is ſo powerfully exerted in producing *entre-chats*, as to be languid

to

to every other purpoſe. A few ſchool-boy rhimes confer not the laurel of Wit; and it was a great proof of an oppoſite character in this Nobleman, to give his compoſitions to the world. He may underſtand French and Italian, and, perhaps, ſpeak both thoſe languages tolerably well; it is probable, alſo, that he may not have forgot everything he learned at ſchool; but indeed, indeed, my friend, he is no Wit.

Charles Fox is highly gifted; his talents are of a very ſuperior nature: and, in my opinion, *Fitzpatrick* is ſcarcely behind him: in the article of colloquial merit, he is, at leaſt,

his equal: but they neither of them poſſeſs that Attic character, which, while it corrects, gives ſtrength to imagination, and, while it governs, gives dignity to Wit. The late *Earl of Bath*, and Mr. *Charles Townſhend*, were bleſſed with no inconſiderable ſhare of it; and it is an intemperate vivacity of genius which confounds it in Mr. *Edmund Burke*. But the man who is in the moſt perfect poſſeſſion of it, has figured in ſo high a line of public life, as to prevent the attention of mankind from leaving his greater qualities to conſider his private and domeſtic character: I mean *Lord Chatham*, whoſe familiar converſation is only to be excelled by his public eloquence. Perhaps

haps Lord Mansfield was born, if I may uſe the expreſſion, with every Attic diſpoſition; but the ſhackles of a law education and profeſſion, and ſome other circumſtances which I need not mention, have formalized, and, in ſome degree, repreſſed the brilliance of his genius. With reſpect to this great man, I cannot but pathetically apoſtrophize with Pope,

"How ſweet an *Ovid* was in *Murray* loſt!"

George Selwyn is very ſuperior to *Chaſe Price*, but very inferior to *Charles Townſhend*, againſt whom, however, he uſed, as I am told, continually to get the laugh: but this proves nothing; for good-homoured *George Bodens* would have gained the

prize from them both in the article of creating laughter. I may be wrong, perhaps, but it has ever appeared to me that Mr. *Selwyn*'s faculty of repartee is mechanical, and ariſes more from habit than from genius. It would be a miſerable buſineſs indeed, if a man, who had been playing upon words for ſo many years, ſhould not have attained the faculty of commanding them at his pleaſure.

B— — converſes with elegance; L— —n is an excellent critic; and many others of the ſame claſs may be found, who are well qualified to be members of a literary club, but no farther. *Garrick* is *himſelf* upon the

the ſtage, and an *actor* every-where elſe. *Foote* is a mimic every-where; excellent, delightful, on the theatre and in private ſociety; but ſtill a mimic. No one can take more pains than Mrs M— — — to be ſurrounded with men of wit; ſhe bribes, ſhe penſions, ſhe flatters, gives excellent dinners, is herſelf a very ſenſible woman, and of very pleaſing manners; not young, indeed, but that is out of the queſtion; ---and, in ſpite of all theſe encouragements, which, one would think, might make Wits ſpring out of the ground, the converſations of her houſe are too often critical and pedantic, --- ſomething between the dulneſs and the pertneſs of learn-

ing. They are perfectly chaſte, and generally inſtructive; but a cool and quiet obſerver would ſometimes laugh to ſee how difficult a matter it is for *la belle Preſidente* to give colour and life to her literary circles. It ſurprizes me that you ſhould leave *Windham* out of your liſt, who (obſerve my prophecy) will become one of the ableſt men and ſhining characters that the latter part of this age will produce. I hazard little in ſuch a *preſentiment*; for his talents, judgment, and attainments, will verify it.

The gibes and jeſts, that are wont to ſet the table in a roar, promote the chearful purpoſes of convivial ſociety,

ſociety, but they have nothing to do with that *Attic* converſation which is the higheſt enjoyment of the human intellect. Wit, believe me, is almoſt extinct; and I will tell you, among other reaſons, why I think ſo:---becauſe no one ſeems to have any idea of what Wit is, or who deſerves the title of it.---To think little, talk of every-thing, and doubt of nothing; to uſe only the external parts of the ſoul, and cultivate the ſurface, as it were, of the judgment; to be happy in expreſſion, to have an agreeable fancy, an eaſy and refined converſation, and to be able to pleaſe, without acquiring eſteem; to be born with the equivocal talent of a ready apprehenſion, and, on that account,

account, to think one's ſelf above reflection; to fly from object to object, without gaining a perfect knowledge of any; to gather haſtily all the flowers, and never allow the fruit time to arrive at maturity; all theſe, collected together, form a faint picture of what the generality of people, in this age, are pleaſed to honour with the name of Wit.

You muſt not be angry with me for this long letter, but rather be thankful that it is ſo ſhort, conſidering the ſubject you threw before me, and the deſire I have to ſet you a-thinking on a ſubject of which you ſeem to have formed very wrong notions. I again repeat, that true

Wit

Wit is expiring, and geat talents alſo. My words are prophetic, and a few years will determine the matter. It would not be a difficulty to prove the why and the wherefore; but of all ſubjects theſe half metaphyſical ones are the moſt unpleaſant to

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE NINETEENTH.

My dear — —,

WITHOUT any violent exertions of my natural vanity, I can eaſily imagine that the eye of mankind

mankind looks toward my political career; and that, for want of a better ſubject, there may be ſome among them who amuſe themſelves with forming conjectures concerning it. The miniſtry have attempted to feel my pulſe upon the occaſion, but without ſucceſs; though I will tell you in confidence, that they have nothing, at preſent, to fear from me. In the great ſubject of this day's politics, which ſeems to engulph every other, I am with them. I ſhall never ceaſe to contend for the univerſality and unity of the *Britiſh Empire* over all its territories and dependencies, in every part of the globe. I have not a doubt of the legiſlative ſupremacy

of

of Parliament over every part of the Britiſh dominions in *America*, the *Eaſt* and *Weſt Indies*, in *Africa*, and over *Ireland* itſelf.

I cannot ſeparate the ideas of Legiſlation and Taxation; they ſeem to be more than twins; they were not only born, but muſt co-exiſt and die together. The queſtion of Right is heard of no more; it is now become a queſtion of Power; and it appears to me that the ſword will determine the conteſt. The Colonies pretend to be ſubject to the King alone; they deny ſubordination to the ſtate, and, upon this principle, have not only declared againſt the authority of Parliament, but erected a go-

a government of their own, independent of Britiſh legiſlation. To ſupport a diſobedience to rights which they once acknowledged, they have already formed aſſociations, armed and arrayed themſelves, and are preparing to bring the queſtion to the iſſue of battle. This being the caſe, it becomes highly neceſſary for us to arm alſo; we muſt prepare to quench the evil in its infancy, and to extinguiſh a flame which the natural enemies of *England* will not fail to feed with unremitting fuel, in order to conſume our commerce, and tarniſh our glory. If wiſe meaſures are taken, this buſineſs will be ſoon completed, to the honour of the Mother-Country, and the

the welfare of the Colonies, who, in ſpite of all the aſſiſtance given them by the Houſe of *Bourbon*, muſt, unleſs our Government acts like an ideot, be forced to ſubmiſſion.

For my own part, I have not that high opinion of their Roman ſpirit, as to ſuppoſe that it will influence them contentedly to ſubmit to all the horrors of war, to reſign every comfort in which they have been bred, to relinquiſh every hope with which they have been flattered, and retire to the howling wilderneſs for an habitation; and all for a dream of liberty, which, were they to poſſeſs to-morrow, would not

give

give them a privelege ſuperior to thoſe which they lately enjoyed, and might, I fear, deprive them of many which they experienced beneath the clement legiſlation of the Britiſh government.

I do not mean to enter at large into the ſubject; but, if miniſters know what they are about, the matter may be ſoon decided: and in every meaſure which tends to promote ſuch a deſirable end, they ſhall receive all the poor helps I can give them. I will neither ſit ſilent, nor remain inactive; but if, by neglect, ignorance, or an indeciſive ſpirit, the latter of which I rather ſuſpect from them, they

ſhould

ſhould let the monſter grow up into ſize and ſtrength, my ſupport ſhall be changed into oppoſition, and all my powers exerted to remove men from a ſtation to which they are unequal.---Remember this aſſertion,---preſerve this letter,---and let it appear in judgment againſt me, if I err from my preſent declaration.

I remain, yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTIETH.

IT was very natural in ſuch a *Strephon* as you are, to imagine that I had hurried away to court

the nymphs; I mean the wood-nymphs of H— —. Now, I have ſo little thought about, or regard for theſe ladies, that I had, at one time, determined to deſpoil their ſhade, and make a profitable uſe of the oaks which ſhelter them. You will ſhriek at the idea like any *Hamadryad*; but, in ſpite of ſhrieks or entreaties, I had it in contemplation to be patriotic, and give the groves of H— — to the ſervice of my country.

The ſyſtem of modern gardening, in ſpite of Faſhion and Mr. *Brown*, is a very fooliſh one. The huddling together every ſpecies of building into a park or garden, is ridiculous.

The

The environs of a magnificent houſe ſhould partake, in ſome degree, of the neceſſary formality of the building they ſurround. This was *Kent*'s opinion; and, where his deſigns have eſcaped the deſtruction of modern refinement, there is an eaſy grandeur which is at once ſtriking and delightful. Fine woods are beautiful objects, and their beauty approaches nearer to magnificence, as the maſs of foliage becomes more viſible; but to dot them with little white edifices, infringes upon their greatneſs, and, by ſuch diviſions and ſubdiviſions, deſtroys their due effect. The verdure of Britiſh ſwells was not made for Grecian temples: a flock of ſheep and a ſhepherd's hut

are better adapted to it. Our climate is not ſuited to the deities of *Italy* and *Greece*, and in an hard winter I feel for the ſhuddering divinities. At H—— there is a *Temple* of *Theſeus*, commonly called by the gardener the Temple of *Perſeus*, which ſtares you in the face wherever you go; while the *Temple of God*, commonly called by the gardener the *Pariſh Church*, is ſo induſtriouſly hid by trees from without, that the pious matron can hardly read her prayer-book within. This was an evident preference of ſtrange gods, and, in my opinion, a very blaſphemous improvement.——Where Nature is grand, improve her grandeur, not by adding extraneous decorations,

but

but by removing obſtructions. Where a ſcene is, in itſelf, lovely, very little is neceſſary to give it all due advantage, eſpecially if it be laid into park, which undergoes no variety of cultivation.

Stow is, in my opinion, a moſt deteſtable place; and has in every part of it the air of a *Golgotha*: a princely one I muſt acknowledge; but in no part of it could I ever loſe that gloomy idea. My own park poſſeſſes many and very rare beauties; but, from the deſign of making it claſſical, it has been charged with many falſe and unſuitable ornaments. A claſſical park, or a claſſical garden, is as ridiculous

an expreſſion as a claſſical plumb-pudding, or a claſſical ſurloin of beef. It is an unworthy action to ſtrip the Claſſics of their heroes, gods, and goddeſſes, to grow green amid the fogs of our unclaſſical climate. But the affectation and nonſenſe of little minds is beyond deſcription. How many are there, who, fearful that mankind will not diſcover their knowledge, are continually hanging out the ſign of hard words and pedantic expreſſions, like the late *Lord Orrery*, who, for ſome claſſical reaſon, had given his dog a claſſical name; it was no leſs than *Cæſar!* However, *Cæſar*, one day, giving his Lordſhip a moſt unclaſſical bite, he ſeized a cane, and

and purſued him round the room with great ſolemnity, and this truly claſſical menace,—" *Cæſar! Cæſar!* " *if I could catch thee, Cæſar! I* " *would give thee as many wounds* " *as Brutus gave thy name-ſake in* " *the Capitol.*" This is the very froth of folly and affectation.

Adieu, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY FIRST.

My dear Sir,

I OBEY your commands with ſome reluctance, in relating the ſtory of which you have heard ſo much,

much, and to which your curioſity appears to be ſo broad awake. I do it unwillingly, becauſe ſuch hiſtories depend ſo much upon the manner in which they are related; and this, which I have told with ſuch ſucceſs, and to the midnight terrors of ſo many ſimple ſouls, will make but a ſorry figure in a written narration.—However, you ſhall have it.

It was in the early part of ———'s life that he attended an hunting club at their ſport, when a ſtranger, of a genteel appearance and well mounted, joined the chace, and was obſerved to ride with a degree of courage and addreſs that called

called forth the utmoſt aſtoniſhment of every one preſent. The beaſt he rode was of amazing powers; nothing ſtopped them; the hounds could never eſcape them; and the huntſman, who was left far behind, ſwore that the man and his horſe were *devils from hell*. When the ſport was over, the company invited this extraordinary perſon to dinner: he accepted the invitation, and aſtoniſhed the company as much by the powers of his converſation, and the elegance of his manners, as by his equeſtrian proweſs. He was an orator, a poet, a painter, a muſician, a lawyer, a divine; in ſhort, he was every thing, and the magic of his diſcourſe kept the drowſy ſportſ-

men

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men

men awake long after their uſual hour. At length, however, wearied Nature could be charmed no more, and the company began to ſteal away by degrees to their repoſe. On his obſerving the ſociety diminiſh, he diſcovered manifeſt ſigns of uneaſineſs: he therefore gave new force to his ſpirits, and new charms to his converſation, in order to detain the remaining few ſome time longer. This had ſome little effect; but the period could not be long delayed when he was to be conducted to his chamber. The remains of the company retired alſo; but they had ſcarce cloſed their eyes, when the houſe was alarmed by the moſt terrible ſhrieks that were ever heard: ſeveral

ſeveral perſons were awakened by the noiſe; but, its continuance being ſhort, they concluded it to proceed from a dog who might be accidentally confined in ſome part of the houſe: they very ſoon, therefore, compoſed themſelves to ſleep, and were very ſoon awakened by ſhrieks and cries of ſtill greater terror than the former. Alarmed at what they heard, ſeveral of them rung their bells, and, when the ſervants came, they declared that the horrid ſounds proceeded from the ſtranger's chamber. Some of the gentlemen immediately aroſe, to enquire into this extraordinary diſturbance; and, while they were dreſſing themſelves for that purpoſe, deeper groans of deſpair,

pair, and ſhriller ſhrieks of agony, again aſtoniſhed and terrified them. After knocking ſome time at the ſtranger's chamber-door, he anſwered them as one awakened from ſleep, declared he had heard no noiſe, and, rather in an angry tone, deſired he might not be again diſturbed. Upon this they returned to one of their chambers, and had ſcarce begun to communicate their ſentiments to each other, when their converſation was interrupted by a renewal of yells, ſcreams, and ſhrieks, which, from the horror of them, ſeemed to iſſue from the throats of damned and tortured ſpirits. They immediately followed the ſounds, and traced them to the ſtranger's cham-

chamber, the door of which they inſtantly burſt open, and found him upon his knees in bed, in the act of ſcourging himſelf with the moſt unrelenting ſeverity, his body ſtreaming with blood. On their ſeizing his hand to ſtop the ſtrokes, he begged them, in the moſt wringing tone of voice, as an act of mercy, that they would retire, aſſuring them that the cauſe of their diſturbance was over, and that in the morning he would acquaint them with the reaſons of the terrible cries they had heard, and the melancholy ſight they ſaw. After a repetition of his entreaties, they retired; and in the morning ſome of them went to his chamber, but he was not there; and,

and, on examining the bed, they found it to be one gore of blood. Upon further enquiry, the groom ſaid, that, as ſoon is was light, the gentleman came to the ſtable booted and ſpurred, deſired his horſe might be immediately ſaddled, and appeared to be extremely impatient till it was done, when he vaulted inſtantly into his ſaddle, and rode out of the yard on full ſpeed.—Servants were immediately diſpatched into every part of the ſurrounding country, but not a ſingle trace of him could be found; ſuch a perſon had not been ſeen by any-one, nor has he been ſince heard of.

The circumſtances of this ſtrange ſtory were immediately committed

to

to writing, and ſigned by every-one who were witneſſes to them, that the future credibility of any-one, who ſhould think proper to relate them, might be duly ſupported. Among the ſubſcribers to the truth of this hiſtory are ſome of the firſt names of this century.——It would now, I believe, be impertinent to add any thing more, than that I am,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

I THANK you moſt ſincerely, my very dear Friend, for your obliging congratulations on my late

promotion; and I have no better way to anſwer the friendly counſels which accompany them, but by opening my heart to you upon the occaſion, and truſting its ſentiments with you.

You knew my father, and I am ſure you will applaud me in declaring that his character did real honour to his rank and his nature. A grateful fame will wait upon his memory, till, by ſome new change in human affairs, the great and good men of this country and period ſhall be loſt to the knowledge of diſtant generations. In the republic of letters he roſe to a very conſiderable eminence; his deep poli-

tical

tical erudition is univerſally acknowledged; and, as a ſenator both of the lower and higher order, his name is honoured with diſtinguiſhed veneration. In his private as well as public life, he was connected and in friendſhip with the firſt men of the times in which he lived; and, as a character of ſtrict virtue and true piety, he has been univerſally held forth as the moſt ſtriking example of this age. The idea of uncommon merit accompanies all opinion of him; and to mention his name is to awaken the moſt pleaſing and amiable ſentiments. As you read this ſhort and imperfect outline of his character, fill it up and do it juſtice. Now, it will, perhaps,

ſurprize you, when you are informed, that the poſt in government which this great and good man moſt deſired, and could never obtain, was the *Chief Juſticeſhip in Eyre*, &c. &c. The reverſe of the picture is as follows: that your humble ſervant, and his *gracious* ſon, whoſe character you perfectly know, has been appointed to this very poſt, in the infancy of his peerage, without any previous ſervice performed, hint given, or requiſition made on his part, and without the propoſition of any conditions on the part of the Miniſter. When I was ſurprized by the offer, I was ſurprized alſo by a ſudden and unuſual ſuffuſion on my cheeks, at the contraſt

contraſt of mine and my father's character,—of mine and my father's lot. Indeed, ſo big was my heart on the occaſion, that, when the miniſterial ambaſſador had left me, the ſentiments of it burſt forth upon the firſt perſon I ſaw, who happened not to be a very proper receptacle for the reflections of virtue.

There is a very great encouragement in this world to be wicked, and the *Devil* certainly goes about in more pleaſing ſhapes than that of *a roaring lion.* In the name of Fortune, my dear friend, how and why are theſe things? Is it the encreaſing corruption of the times, or the weakneſs of government, that

gives to diſſolute men the meed of Virtue; or do miniſters think it expedient to give a ſop to the maſtiff whoſe growl might make them tremble? You, who have made men and manners your ſtudy, who have looked ſo deeply into the volume of the heart, and have acquired ſuch an happy art of reconciling the apparent inconſiſtencies of human affairs, muſt inſtruct me. I wiſh you could improve and convert me! I am not inſenſible to what is good; nay, there are moments when the full luſtre of virtue beams upon me. I try to ſeize it; but the gleam eſcapes me, and I am re-involved in darkneſs. The conflict of reaſon and paſſion is but the conflict of a moment;

moment; and the latter never fails to bear me off in triumph.

——————*Video meliora proboque,*
Deteriora ſequor.

I am yours moſt truly, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

I WISH the *Morning Poſt*, and every other Poſt that ſcatters ſuch malignant, falſe, and deteſtable hiſtories, in the bottomleſs pit, with its writers, printers, editors, publiſhers, collectors, and purchaſers. To be

the ſubject of an occaſional paragraph is not worth a frown. It is a tax which every one in high ſtation muſt pay, be he good, or be he bad, to that *Demon* of Calumny, who now has a temple prepared for his ſervice at every breakfaſt-table in the metropolis. But to be the ſole theme of a ſcandalous chronicle, and to ſee it not only ſaved from oblivion, but raiſed into univerſal notice and reception, from its abuſive hiſtories of me, is a circumſtance big with every pain and penalty of mortification. To add to my diſtreſs, no means of ſatisfaction or revenge are in my power; and, if reſentment were to weave a ſcourge, and I could uſe it to my wiſhes, I

ſhould

ſhould only give new materials to prolong the tale. The buſineſs of ſilent contempt is above me; and the mode of conduct you recommend is like St. *Auſtin*'s reaſon for belief, *quia impoſſibile eſt*. I cannot enter an houſe where the page of my diſhonour does not lie upon the table. Every man who meets me in the ſtreet, tells me by his very looks that he has read it. I have overheard my own ſervants obſerving upon it, and the very chairmen can repeat its tales. I expect every day that my horſe, like Balaam's aſs, will neigh ſcandal at me; not indeed from celeſtial, but helliſh intervention.

Some ſteps, however, muſt be

taken, and ſome method adopted to ſilence the cry. To bribe the hounds would produce a mortification almoſt equal to what I now ſuffer; but there is no divining how long the ſtory may laſt, and the *totâ cantabitur urbe* is terrible. Bear it I cannot, and revenge is not in my power. The raſcal keeps within the circle of privilege; and, if he ſhould ſlip out of it, I am afraid that it would not anſwer my purpoſe to avail myſelf of his incaution. In ſhort, I don't know what to do. You will oblige me more than ever, in forming ſome wiſe reſolutions for me, and in perſuading me to execute them.——Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

My dear Friend,

YOUR ſenſibility towards me during my late perſecution, is a flattering mark of that affectionate eſteem which you have ever borne me. I moſt ſincerely thank you for it; and have only to wiſh that the world knew I ſtill retained ſo warm a place in your heart. Such a circumſtance would ſerve as an antidote againſt the poiſon which has been inſtilled into the minds of mankind on my ſubject. The batteries of Scandal are at length turned from me; and ſome new object of their rage will, I hope, make their thundering attack upon me to be quickly forgotten.

I love

I love my country, its conſtitution, and its privileges, too well to ſay, write, or even think any-thing againſt that palladium of Britiſh freedom, the Liberty of the Preſs, though I have been ſuch a ſufferer by it. While it remains, (and may it ever remain!) the people of England will have a ſecurity for thoſe privileges which give them a ſuperiority over every other nation. Perhaps the enormities of private ſcandal ſhould be checked, at the ſame time that, I think, it would be dangerous to ſuffer even an excreſcence of any ſtaple privilege to be cut off. The track of innovation widens every moment; and on this example, if it was once opened, there is no ſaying where it would end.

A Prieſt,

A Prieſt, I think, is ſaid to have invented Gunpowder; and a Soldier has the credit of firſt ſuggeſting the art of Printing: and I have heard wonderfully curious and profound obſervations made upon the ſtrange combination of the inventors and their inventions. But, ſurely, it does not require a moment's reflection to diſcover that this improvement in the buſineſs of war, as well as in the republic of letters, could not have proceeded ſo naturally from any other characters. It is, I believe, univerſally allowed, that, ſince the introduction of artillery and fire-arms, the trade of war is become comparatively innocent: Slaughter no longer wades knee-deep in blood;

and

and her ſword is now no ſooner drawn than it is ſatisfied. A diſcovery, therefore, which has leſſened the carnage and horrors of battle, was moſt naturally produced by a Miniſter of the Goſpel of Peace. On the contrary, we have only to examine of letters ſince the invention of Printing, and lo! what an hoſt of polemical writers appear, armed with the moſt bitter ſpirit of malice and reſentment! What feuds, both national and domeſtic, have ariſen from it! What rage has been enflamed! How many wars have been engendered! What diſgraceful, inflammatory, and unchriſtian controverſies maintained! How many ſcandals of every kind have been propagated,

gated, and what paſſions have been incited by it! &c. &c. ſo that the moſt free governments have been obliged to enact laws to reſtrain and controul it. Such an invention, therefore, may be ſaid to proceed, in its natural courſe, from one whoſe profeſſion is founded in the animoſities, injuſtice, and malevolence of mankind. I doubt not but you will now agree with me, that the world is, as it ought to be, more indebted to the prieſt than the ſoldier.—You will tell me, perhaps, that this argument ariſes from the ſmarting of my wounds, which are not yet ſkinned over: I feel myſelf of a contrary opinion; but I will quit the ſubject till not a ſcar remains, when I ſhall take

take the opportunity of ſome tranquil hour to bring the matter, by your leave, into debate with you. I remain, with great regard, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

My dear — — —,

I Muſt acknowledge, notwithſtanding I am treated with ſome degree of civility in it, that the Dedication you mention is a wretched buſineſs, and diſgraces the volume to which it is prefixed. You wonder I did not write a better for him myſelf;

myſelf; and I would, moſt aſſuredly, have done it, but, among many excellent qualities which this dedicator poſſeſſes, he is a blab of the firſt delivery, and I dared not ventue rto truſt him.

The teſtamentary arrangement which appointed him to the honourable labours of an editor, took its riſe from three motives: firſt, to mark a degree of parental reſentment againſt an ungracious ſon;—ſecondly, from an opinion that a gracious nephew's well-timed flatteries had created of his own underſtanding; — and, thirdly, from a deſign of beſtowing upon this ſelf-ſame gracious nephew a legacy of honour from

from the publication, and of profit from the ſale, of the volume. He is as proud of the buſineſs as a new-made Knight of his title, is never eaſy but when he is receiving incenſe from bookſellers and their journeymen, and loves to be pointed at as a child of ſcience. I wiſh he may be contented with his preſent celebrity; though, if I know him aright, this editorial buſineſs will awaken ideas of his having talents for a ſuperior character, and that he is qualified to publiſh his own works with as much eclat as he has done thoſe of another. If he attempts to climb the ladder of ambition in any, but particularly in a literary way, he muſt fall. I have counſelled him to be

content;

content; and the booby gives it out that I am envious of his reputation. Poor, ſilly fool! I only wiſh the daw may keep the one poor feather he has got; for, if he attempts any addition to his plumage, the vanity will draw him into a ſcrape, in which he will be ſtripped as bare as Nature made him.

But, to change my ſubject to a coxcomb of another ſex: Mrs. ——— has done what ſhe has no right to do, and has ſaid what ſhe is not authoriſed to ſay. It is not in the power even of ſo able and ſo reſpectable an advocate as yourſelf to work up any-thing that has the ſemblance of a ſatisfactory juſtifica-

tion. Your arguments, which are ſo powerful in the cauſe of truth, are the ſlighteſt of all cobwebs in ſupport, or, I ſhould rather ſay, in palliation of falſehood. This, among other things, is much to your honour, and I congratulate your diſqualification to plead a bad cauſe. If you have been a volunteer on the occaſion, I compliment your gallantry; if you have been influenced by the Lady's requeſt, I admire your ready friendſhip. You have every merit with me; and, to give you the ſatisfaction you ſo well deſerve, I cannot but authoriſe you to ſet the dame at reſt, and to huſh her every fear. This is no ſmall ſacrifice; for I have the moſt ample means of vengeance

geance in my hands: and, if it will advance your intereſts at her court, you have full permiſſion to declare that my wrath has been averted by your interpoſition.

——*Nullum memorabile nomen*
Fœminâ in pœnâ eſt, nec habet Victoria laudem.

I remain, very truly, &c. &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

YOU have won both your wagers.—In ſpeaking of the inhabitants of *China*, I do make uſe

of the word *Chineſes*; and I borrow the term from *Milton*. As to your firſt bet, that I uſed ſuch an expreſſion, your ears, I truſt, will be grateful for the confidence you had in them. But your ſecond wager, that, if I did uſe it, I had a good authority, is very flattering to myſelf; and I thank you for the opinion you entertain of the accuracy of my language. My memory will not, at this moment, direct you to the page; but you will readily find the word in the Index of *Newton*'s edition of *Milton*.

Of all the poets that have graced ancient times, or delighted the latter ages, *Milton* is my favourite; I think him

him ſuperior to every other, and the writer of all others the beſt calculated to elevate the mind to form a nobleneſs of taſte, and to teach a bold, commanding, energetic language. I read him with delight as ſoon as I could read him at all; and, I remember, in my father's words, I gave the firſt token of premature abilities in the peruſal of the *Paradiſe Loſt*. I was quite a boy, when, in reading that poem, I was ſo forcibly ſtruck with a paſſage, that I laid down the book with ſome violence on the table, and took an haſty turn to the other end of the room. Upon explaining the cauſe of this emotion to my father, he ſeized, claſped me in his arms, ſmo-

thered me with embraces, and immediately wrote letters to all his family and friends, to inform them of the wonderful foreboding I had given of future genius. Your curiosity may naturally expect to be gratified with the passage in question; I quote it, therefore, for your reflection and amusement:

He spake: and, to confirm his words, out flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim: the sudden blaze
Far round illumin'd Hell!

The two principal orators of the present age (and one of them, perhaps, a greater than has been produced in any age) are the Earls of *Mansfield* and *Chatham*. The former

mer is a great man; *Ciceronian*, but, I ſhould think, inferior to *Cicero*. The latter is a greater man; *Demoſthenian*, but ſuperior to *Demoſthenes*. The firſt formed himſelf on the model of the great Roman orator; he ſtudied, tranſlated, rehearſed, and acted his Orations: the ſecond diſdained imitation, and was himſelf a model of eloquence, of which no idea can be formed but by thoſe who have ſeen and heard him. His words have ſometimes frozen my young blood into ſtagnation, and ſometimes made it pace in ſuch an hurry through my veins, that I could ſcarce ſupport it. He, however, embelliſhed his ideas by claſſical amuſements, and occaſionally read

the ſermons of *Barrow*, which he conſidered as a mine of nervous expreſſions: but, not content to correct and inſtruct his imagination by the works of mortal men, he borrowed his nobleſt images from the language of Inſpiration. Mr. *Edmund Burke* alſo gives an happy dignity to parts of his ſpeeches, a want of which is, in general, their only defect, by the application of ſcriptural expreſſions.

Though I have ſuch bright and venerable examples before my eyes, I purſue a ſomewhat different, but not an oppoſite track; for *Milton*, from the excellence and form of his works, has every claim to the title

of

of a *claſſic*: from the nature alſo of his principal ſubjects, which are drawn from ſcripture, we may be ſaid, in ſome degree, to read the ſacred writings when his great poetical Commentary of them (for ſo I ſhall call his *Paradiſe Loſt* and *Regained*) is the object of our ſtudies.---The Orations of *Cicero*, notwithſtanding their character in the world, pleaſe, but do not inflame me. We are at too great a diſtance from the period, and have not a ſufficient idea of the manner, of their delivery, to be affected by them. They are very fine compoſitions; and it is the evidence of their being compoſitions that is their chief fault: and if *Lord Mansfield* were to pronounce the

beſt

beſt of them, in his beſt manner, I doubt much of their ſuppoſed effect. They chill the warmth of my feelings; and I have often eſſayed, but in vain, to work up in me an elevation of mind and ſpirits from a repetition of the Roman Orations. I muſt acknowlege that *Lord Bolingbroke*, a great and ſplendid authority, is againſt me, who, in language more animating than I could ever find in *Tully*'s eloquence, declares that no man who has a ſoul can read his Orations, after the revolutions of ſo many ages, after the extinction of the governments and of the people for whom they were compoſed, without feeling at this hour the paſſions they were deſigned

to

to move, and the ſpirit they were deſigned to raiſe. If this be true, in his Lordſhip's ſenſe of the expreſſion, I have no ſoul: but I ſuſpect the truth of this aſſertion, as I well know that he would, at any time, ſacrifice a juſt criticiſm to a fine period, and truth itſelf to a brilliant paſſage. His character and genius were both intemperate; and, when his tongue or his pen were pleaſed with their ſubjects, he was borne rapidly on by the ſtream of eloquence, nor conſidering or caring whither he went. When his imagination was once kindled, it was an equal chance whether he obſcured Virtue, or dignified Vice. The ſource of his deluſive writings was

an

an headſtrong, vivid fancy, which practiſed as great deceits upon himſelf, as he had ever done upon mankind.—But to return to my ſubject:

For the life of me, I cannot read Sermons even with Lord *Chatham*; and my hands are too unhallowed to unfold the Sacred volume: but I find in *Milton's* Poems every thing that is ſublime in thought, beautiful in imagery, and energetic in language and expreſſion. To attain a reputation for eloquence is my aim and my ambition; and, if I ſhould acquire the art of cloathing my thoughts in happy language, adorning them with ſtriking images, or enforcing them by commanding words,

words, I ſhall be indebted for ſuch advantages to the ſtudy of our great Britiſh claſſic.

I know you would not recommend my friends, the Poets, to take a leading part in the ſtudy of eloquence. You may, probably, apprehend that poetical purſuits would be apt to give too poetical a turn to diſcourſe as well as writing; and to beget a greater attention to ſound than to ſenſe. Such an idea is certainly founded in truth; and your objections are perfectly ſenſible, when an application to the Poets is not conducted with judgment, and moderated by proſaic reading and exerciſes. — A little circumſtance in point

point, which juſt occurs to me, will make you ſmile: When my father had completed the firſt copy of his Hiſtory, the friends, to whom he ſent it for their criticiſm and correction, univerſally agreed in its being written in a kind of irregular blank verſe, from the beginning to the end. He was much ſurprized at the information; but, on examining his work, he found it to be true, and gave to the whole the excellent dreſs it now wears. Sir Robert R—— was ſo unfair as to impreſs ſome of the paſſages upon his memory, and has ſince been ſo ill-natured as to repeat them.—But, to put a period to this long letter, I declare myſelf to be very angry, when you

you are but twenty miles from me, that you ſhould not put your horſes to your chaiſe, and be here in a ſhorter ſpace of time than is neceſſary to fill up half a ſheet of paper. You will do well to come and amuſe yourſelf here, leaving gouty uncles and croaking aunts to themſelves. There is more vivacity concentrated in my little dell, than is to be found in all the ample ſweeps of your vale. As you are muſical, I will prepare a ſyren to ſing to you, and you ſhall accompany her in any manner you pleaſe. Adieu!

Yours, moſt truly, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

I CANNOT yet fancy the ſuſpected preliminaries of alliance between *France* and *America*; and I will tell you why: becauſe I think it will not be the mutual intereſt of either of them to engage in ſuch a treaty. The French finances are not in a ſtate to juſtify the riſquing a war with England, which an open alliance with America muſt immediately produce. *Monſieur de Maupoux*, and *Monſieur de Necker*, if I am rightly informed, are of the ſame opinion, and, I believe, from nobler

nobler motives and better reaſons, are in oppoſition to thoſe propoſals which the *Americans* are ſaid to have offered to induce France to give an avowed ſupport to their cauſe. My information goes ſomewhat farther, and aſſures me, that the opinions of the two ſtateſmen already mentioned are ſupported by all the graver men and old officers in that kingdom. *America*, at preſent, makes a very powerful and extraordinary reſiſtance, and there ſeems to be a ſpirit awakened in her people, which will woefully prolong the period of her reduction. The conteſt is, at preſent, between a child forced into reſiſtance by what it calls tyranny, and a parent enraged at filial ingra-

titude, who is reſolved to reclaim his offſpring by force and chaſtiſement. In ſuch a ſtate, though a mad ſpirit of rebellion may inſtigate revolted children to act againſt the parent, and the brethren of the houſe of their parent, the latter will go very reluctantly to the buſineſs of bloodſhed; and many a brave man will conſider the duty of the ſoldier and the citizen as incompatible, and let the former ſink into the latter. But the moment that *America* flies for protection to the arms of *France*, the caſe will be changed: every tie of conſanguinity will be then broken; it will be impoſſible to diſtinguiſh between them and their allies; they will be all the object of one com-

common reſentment; and the *Americans* muſt expect, as they will ſurely find, an equal exertion againſt them as will be employed againſt their inſidious ſupporters.

But this is not the only reaſon why I think *America* will maintain the conteſt better without the open ſupport of *France*; I have another, in the natural averſion they bear to each other. No two civilized nations, in the ſame quarter of the globe, can bear a more different and claſhing character than *France* and the revolted colonies. Fire and water would as ſoon blend their oppoſite elements, as the ſolemn, gloomy, unpoliſhed *American*, with the gay,

ſprightly, animated *Frenchman.* Beſides, how will it be poſſible for the ſimple, ſullen leaven of *Calviniſm* to be kneaded in the ſame lump with the motley genius and complicated ceremony of Popery? While the hope for independence keeps alive the ſpirit of contention, ſuch conſiderations, if ſuggeſted at all, will, for a time, give way to their ambition; but, ſhould the object of it be attained, they would ariſe, on the firſt interval of repoſe, in all the bitterneſs of diſunion, and bring on a ſcene of internal confuſion big with greater horrors than they now experience. What will theſe deluded people think, and how will they act, who, after manifeſting ſuch a

ſolemn

ſolemn and bold averſion to the power of a Proteſtant Biſhop, after having held forth the act of parliament which gave to the conquered inhabitants of Canada a toleration of their religion, as one of their juſtifications to rebellion; I repeat again, what will be the conduct of theſe people, when they ſee the croſs adored in their ſtreets, and hear the benedictions and anathemas of Rome pronounced in their cities!

For my own part, I cannot conceive ſuch an event as *American* Independence; and, in my poor opinion, if it were to be given them to-morrow, it would, in the end, prove a worſe preſent than the *Stamp*

Act itſelf, with all its aggravated horrors.—The guards are ordered to croſs the *Atlantic*, and —— along with them. I am glad you like him; I thought my prophecy in that particular would be fulfilled. You knew *Madame*, I think, at *Geneva*. They both poſſeſs the ſame diſpoſition to give a pleaſant turn to every thing. They put their ſon to board *chez un Bourgeois de Dijon*, and have never ſince troubled themſelves about the boy, or the penſion ſtipulated for his ſupport. Luckily for the child, the man to whoſe care he was entruſted has taken a fancy to him, and declares, if he ſhould be deſerted by his parents, that he will do his beſt to provide for

for him; and our friends think it the beſt joke in the world.

I have been to ſee the *Juſtitia* hulk, where, among many other miſerables, I ſaw poor *Dignam* wear the habit of a ſlave. He ſeemed diſpoſed to ſpeak to me; but I had previouſly deſired the ſuperintendent to requeſt him, ſince it was not in my power to do him ſervice, to wave all appearance of his having known me. This mode of puniſhment offers a very ſhocking ſpectacle; and, I think, muſt undergo ſome alleviation, if it be not entirely aboliſhed. If it were to come again before parliament, I ſhould give the ſubject a very ſerious conſideration,

and the meaſure a very ſerious oppoſition. Is it not extraordinary, that the firſt public exhibition of ſlavery in this kingdom,---for ſo it is, however the ſituation may be qualified by law,---ſhould be ſuggeſted by a Scotchman, and that the firſt regulator of this miſerable buſineſs ſhould be from the ſame country? I do not mean to throw out any unpleaſant ideas concerning any-one whoſe lot it was to be born on the other ſide of the *Tweed*, but merely to ſtate a fact for your obſervation. I have known many of my northern fellow-ſubjects, and eſteemed them. *David Hume* poſſeſſes my ſincere admiration; but, though the object of his writings was

was to remove prejudices, he himſelf poſſeſſed the ſtrongeſt in favour of his country, and was, as is the great weakneſs of Scotchmen, ſo jealous of its honour, that I gave him great offence at *Lord Hertford's* at *Ragley*, by aſking him at what time of the year the harveſt was houſed in *Scotland*. My queſtion aroſe from an innocent deſire of being ſatisfied in that particular; but he conceived it to convey a ſuſpicion, that there was no harveſt, or at leaſt no barns, in his country; and his anſwer was ſlight and churliſh.—— Fare you well! If you hear anything on the Continent that at all concerns the preſent ſtate of public affairs, I beg you will not fail to favour

vour me with the moſt early communication.

I am, with great ſincerity, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

My dear — — —,

I CANNOT aſſert it as a matter within my own knowledge; but I have ſome reaſon to believe, that the late *Earl* of *Bath*, at the cloſe of life, manifeſted a kind of preference of the *French* to the *Engliſh* government. Upon what principles

ples ſuch an opinion was grounded, I cannot pretend to ſay: it is impoſſible he could form it in the abſtract; it muſt ariſe, therefore, from pride of heart, degrading ſentiments of mankind, a natural love of power, or from ſome of thoſe ſelfiſh motives which grow more ſtrong and prevalent as men approach the end of their days. In ſhort, the French government might be more ſuitable to his character and diſpoſitions; and, though this conjecture is not in his favour, I believe it to have a foundation in truth. It is a common caſe among mankind, where reaſon and judgment are perverted by the ſtrength of habitual inclination. I will give

you

you an example that ſhall pleaſe you.

No one of common underſtanding, and who has the leaſt idea of human affairs, or knowledge of human nature, after a comparative examination of the *Goſpel* and the *Alcoran*, will not give to the former a moſt inſtant, decided, and univerſal preference. He will admire the rational and amiable doctrines of the one, and as readily acknowledge the abſurdities of the other. Nevertheleſs, there are men of ſenſe, ---I know ſome of them, and ſo do you, my friend,---who would ſo far yield to the warm deſire of habitual gratification, as to give their imme-

immediate conſent to exchange Chriſtianity for the religion of *Mahomet*. *Lord Bath* muſt have been indebted for the opinions given to him, to the triumph of an irrational ſelf-love over a rational love of mankind: perhaps, to the imbecillity of his ſocial affections may be added the ſtrange caprices of diſappointed dotage.

I have either read or heard an aſſertion, that it is impoſſible to find upon earth a ſociety of men who govern themſelves upon principles of humanity: and I am forced to acknowledge, that the opinion will find a very powerful ſupport in the cuſtoms of almoſt every country

in

in the world. Whoever will conſider with attention the hiſtories of mankind, and examine, with an impartial eye, the conduct of different nations, will be ſoon convinced, that, except thoſe duties which are abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of the human ſpecies, he cannot name any principle of morals, nor imagine any rule of virtue, which, in ſome part or other of the world, is not directly contradicted by the general practice of entire ſocieties. The moſt poliſhed nations have ſuppoſed, that they had an equal right to expoſe their children, as to bring them into the world. There are countries now exiſting, where the child feels it as an

an high act of filial duty to desert or murder their parents, when they can no longer contribute to their own support. *Garcilasso de la Vega* relates, that certain people of *Peru* make concubines of their female prisoners of war, nourish and carefully feed the children they have by them, on which they afterwards feast. But this is not all; when the wretched mother can no longer furnish the delicacies of their horrid banquets from her womb, she shares the fate of her offspring, and becomes the meal of the barbarians whose throats have been moistened with the blood of her children.

It would be a matter of very little difficulty to fill a volume with the various inhumanities which mingle with the governments of the *Aſian*, *African*, and ſavage *American* nations of this day. The hiſtorians, alſo, of ancient times, would greatly encreaſe the ſad hiſtory of human calamity; nor is the quarter of the world which we inhabit exempted from furniſhing its quota to the miſerable account. The various cuſtoms, religions, and governments, which divide more enlightened *Europe*, might furniſh a multitude of actions leſs barbarous, indeed, in their appearance, but as reprehenſible in reality, and

as

as dangerous in their conſequences, as thoſe already recited.

England, however, has this advantage over the reſt of her neighbour kingdoms, that the examples of inhumanity which ſhe has produced have ariſen from an audacious abuſe of her laws; while thoſe of other nations ſeem to ariſe from the nature of their conſtitutions. A code of ſuch wiſe, rational, and humane legiſlation never was known in the world, as that which preſcribes the rule of conduct, as well to the governors as to the governed, in our kingdom. The principles of it are founded in the perfection of human reaſon, and, in a certain

degree, on that happy union of juſtice and mercy which Divines have given to the decrees of Omnipotence. But my paper admoniſhes me to quit this intereſting ſubject, or it will not leave me a ſpace ſufficient to aſſure you with what real regard I am,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

THE firſt article of your letter, which tells me of ——— ———'s death, has very much affected

fected me; and, if it had arrived three hours ſooner, I would have ſet off for London, to have diſſipated the grave thoughts it occaſions. I can hardly give credit to your account of her laſt moments: ſhe had much to regret; rank, fortune, friends, and beauty, which, *Saint Evremond* ſays, a woman parts with more reluctantly than even life itſelf. By this time, I truſt, ſhe has reached the Elyſian Fields, and, with the bleſt inhabitants of that delightful abode,

On flowers repos'd, and with freſh garlands crown'd,
Quaffs immortality and joy. ——

However that may be, the event of her death is very ſenſibly felt by me. I ſhall miſs her very much; not indeed as an acquaintance,---for ſhe would admit me only to her public aſſemblies,---but as an object of reſpect: and truly ſorry am I that ſhe is gone, for the ſake of her ſex, as ſhe has not left one behind who can ſupply her place in my good opinion. I had a ſort of occaſional reſpect for every woman on her account, which I fear will be buried in her grave.--She had nothing of female inconſiſtency about her, and every-thing of female delicacy. She converſed with the underſtanding of a man, but with the grace and elegance of her own

own ſex. Her ſentiments, language, and manners, were, like her own frame, in the image of man, but poſſeſſing every attraction of female nature. I will tell you a ſecret; ſhe was the only woman who ever made me bluſh, and ſhe once dyed my cheeks with ſuch a crimſon ſhame, that I feel them glow at this diſtant moment. * *

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To maintain the qualities of goodneſs, tenderneſs, affection, and ſincerity, in the ſeveral offices of life; to diſdain ambition, avarice, luxury, and wantonneſs; and to avoid affectation, folly, childiſhneſs, and levity; is the conſummation of a female character, and was fully accompliſhed by the lovely woman who is no more. She little thought, I believe, that it would be an employment of mine to pen her eulogium; and you ſmile, I ſuppoſe, at my pretenſions to deſcribe female perfection. To tell you the truth, I ſtrained very hard to produce the foregoing period. My brain had a ſevere labour of it, and ſuffered no ſmall pains in the delivery. However,

ever. I now recommend the pious bantling to your care; and, I think, the midwife and the nurſe will not conteſt the buſineſs of ſuperior qualifications.

I put an end to the pleaſure of my acquaintance with — — — at the *Duke of Bolton*'s maſquerade at *Hackwood*, ſome years ago, by what I thought a little ſimple love-making, but which ſhe thought impudence; and ſhe has never ſuffered me to approach her ſince that time, but upon the moſt diſtant footing. You may know, perhaps, that I have got a terrible character for this ſelf-ſame vice of effrontery, and, I am afraid, not without ſome little reaſon. It is, upon the whole, an

imprudent mode of proceeding; and, though attended with more ſucceſs than modeſt people may imagine, as you well know, never has a proſperous concluſion. One failure tacks a miſerable epithet to one's name for ever. In military operations, the attack by ſtorm ſometimes effects great matters; but, on ſuch a deſign, a repulſe is ſometimes fatal, and always attended with much loſs and bloodſhed. This has been the caſe with me in fields leſs glorious, but far more delightful, than thoſe of *Mars*.

The arrival of newſpapers has cauſed a ſhort interruption to my writing; and they acquaint me with a circumſtance which you have omitted,

omitted, that ſhe died in child-bed. It was a cuſtom, as I have read, among ſome of the antient nations, to bury the infant alive with the mother whoſe death it had occaſioned. I ſhudder at the idea; nevertheleſs, in this particular inſtance, I am diſpoſed to vote all my malice to the brat which has deprived the world of ſo bright an ornament. Adieu!—Shall I pay a compliment to your penetration, in ſuppoſing that you will perceive how tardily my pen has proceeded to the bottom of the page? But this is literally the fact. The French proverb ſays, *On ne parle jamais de bonne foi, quand on parle mal des femmes.* I apprehended

prehended you would be unlucky enough to reverſe the ſentiment, and apply it to,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE THIRTIETH.

WE all of us grew ſuddenly tired of our *Wiltſhire* ruſtication; and, without a diſſentient voice, voted a party to *Briſtol*, where I eat ſuch excellent turtle, and drank ſuch execrable wine, that, with the heat of the weather into the bargain, I was ſuddenly taken ill

ill at the play-houſe, almoſt to fainting, and was obliged to hurry into the air for reſpiration. Believe me, I did not like the buſineſs. Cold ſweats and ſhiverings, accompanied with internal ſinkings, gave me a better notion of dying than I had before, and made me think ſo ſeriouſly of this mortal life, that, on my return home, I ſhall take the opportunity of the firſt gloomy day to make my will, appoint executors, and harangue my lawyer into low ſpirits on the doctrine of death and judgment.

I exhibited myſelf---for none of the party would accompany me---at a public breakfaſt at the *Hot Wells*, and

and ſat down at a long table with a number of animated cadavers, who devoured their meal as if they had not an hour to live; and, indeed, many of them ſeemed to be in that doleful predicament. But this was not all. I ſaw three or four groups of hectic ſpectres engage in cotillions: it brought inſtantly to my mind *Holbein's Dance of Death*; and methought I ſaw the raw-boned ſcare-crow piping and tabouring to his victims.—So I proceeded to the fountain; but, inſtead of roſy, blooming health, diſeaſes of every colour and complection guarded the ſprings. As I approached to taſte them, I was fanned by the fœtid breath of gaſping conſumptions, ſtunned with expiring

expiring coughs, and ſuffocated with the effluvia of ulcerated lungs. —Such a living *Golgotha* never entered into my conceptions; and I could not but look upon the ſtupendous rocks, that riſe in rude magnificence around the place, as the wide-ſpreading jaws of an univerſal ſepulchre.

Lord *Walpole* told me he was there in attendance upon a daughter.—I was glad to turn my back upon the ſcene:--but I had not yet come to the concluſion of it; for, as I was waiting for my chaiſe, two different perſons put cards into my hand, which informed me where funerals were to be furniſhed with the

the greateſt expedition, and that hearſes and mourning-coaches were to let to any part of England. I immediately leaped into my carriage, and ordered the poſtilion to drive with all poſſible haſte from a place where I was in danger of being buried alive.

After all, this tenancy of life is but a bad one, with its waſte and ingreſs of torturing diſeaſes; which, not content with deſtroying the building, maliciouſly torture the poſſeſſor with ſuch pains and penalties, as to make him oftentimes curſe the poſſeſſion.

Man's

Man's feeble race what ills await!
Labour and penury,—the racks of pain;
Diſeaſe and Sorrow's mournful train,
And Death, ſad refuge from the ſtorms of Fate.

If I continue this kind of letter any further, you will tell me that I ſhall repent, found hoſpitals, and die a Methodiſt; and that *Rocheſter*'s Funeral-Sermon and mine will be bound up in the ſame volume, to the edification and comfort of all ſinners of every enormity. Adieu, therefore, and believe me very truly

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

I NEITHER hunt nor ſhoot: the former is a diverſion which requires certain ſacrifices that I cannot grant, and ſhall not enumerate; the latter ſuits me better, but is as little purſued as the other. The buſineſs and form, not to ſay tyranny, of preſerving Game, which is neceſſary to eſtabliſh a certainty of ſport, is not to my way of thinking. The laws concerning Game form a very unconſtitutional monopoly: but that is not all; the peace and ſociety of provincial vicinities are more

more or leſs diſturbed, by jealouſies and diſputes ariſing from the game, in every part of the kingdom. My country employments are better than you imagine. I am reading, with great care and obſervation, the works of the Chancellor *D' Agueſeau* of *France*. Many years ago, my father gave a volume of them to me, deſiring me to ſtudy it with attention, and conſider the contents as his own paternal counſels. At that time I did neither one nor the other; however, I am now making ample amends for former neglect. The magiſtrate, the ſtateſman, the lawyer, the man of the world, the orator, and the philoſopher, will find delight and inſtruction

in theſe volumes. I can ſay no more; and what I have now ſaid will add them to your library, if it does not already poſſeſs them.

You muſt know that I am angry with you for writing to me, or, rather, for not coming, inſtead of writing. Delay not to viſit a place you ſo much admire, and to ſee a friend who loves and values you. We will ſtudy together in the morning, and court the Muſes in the evening, and you ſhall viſit *Pope's* urn by moon-light, and I will promiſe not to laugh at you. I propoſe to remain here a fortnight longer; but, if you will come to me, the time of

my

my departure ſhall be prolonged to your pleaſure. I am, with real regard,

Your moſt faithful, &c.

LETTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

My Lord,

IN obedience to your Lordſhip's commands, I have left no place unſearched, and have ordered every poſſible inquiry to be made after the manuſcript which my father read to you a ſhort time before his death; but in vain. As he had de-

termined upon a republication of his Miſcellaneous Works, with the addition of ſome pieces which had never been printed; I imagine he was cautious about preſerving any papers or compoſitions that were not in his opinion ſufficiently prepared for the preſs, leſt the partiality of his ſurviving friends might give them to the world.

I am apprehenſive, my Lord, that the manuſcript in queſtion ſhared the fate of many others which he had not an inclination to finiſh, and did not chuſe to leave in an unfiniſhed ſtate. However, in my ſearch, I found three or four large ſheets of paper, in a folio volume, which

which appear to contain extracts from the memoirs of the great men of the laſt and preſent centuries, and were probably ſome of the rude materials that formed the biographical ſketches which your Lordſhip ſo much admired, and whoſe loſs, on that account, gives me ſo much concern. Theſe papers contain little more than ſcraps of characters. The principal object of them ſeems to be the *Duke de Vitri*, Ambaſſador Plenipotentiary from the French King, for the peace of *Nimeguen*; but it is impoſſible to form out of them any ſatisfactory account of that able negociator. That my letter, however, may not be entirely without amuſement, I ſhall add a couple

couple of quotations, which I have found among the reſt, from the characters of very figuring perſonages on the theatre of *Europe*. I call them quotations, as they are written in Italian, though I cannot name the author from whence they are taken, and are immediately followed by the character of *Petronius*, from the Annals of *Tacitus*.—The firſt of them relates to *Cardinal Mazarin*, and the ſecond to *Oliver Cromwell*. I ſhall make no apology to your Lordſhip for their language, as I have been informed that you underſtand it equally well with your own. I am, my Lord,

With great reſpect

And obligation, &c.

Car-

Cardinal Mazarin.

MOLTO la natura, non poco l'arte, tutto gli contribuì la fortuna, che ſuppli con la dignità à ciò che mancò ne' natali. Egli haveva bella e grata preſenza, faccia lieta & amabile, occhi vivaci, gratia e decoro ugualmente ſe parlava, o taceva.---Più che fino e capace in ſimular l' intentioni, e diſſimulare gli affetti. La fortuna lo ſoſtennè ad ogni paſſo, e ſe pur alcuna volta les poſe al timor & al pericolo, non fù che per animarlo, e per trarnelo con maggiore trionfo.

Cromwell.

HUOMO grande ne i vitii, è nelle virtù, che nel' arbitrio di licentioſa fortuna

tuna visse con mirabile continenza, sobrio, casto, modesto, vigilante, indefesso, ma da estrema ambitione agitato, appena potè satiarsi col sangue del Rè, e coll' oppressione del regno.

THE END.